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ABSTRACT

This paper includes a qualitative study of the role of "inclusion specialists" in schools, a review of the history of special education, accounts of interviews with 17 special and 7 regular educators, accounts of day-long observations of four specialists, and the author's reflections. The literature review focuses on the relationship of regular and special education, including the emergence of special education, recent legislation, steps to a merged system of education (from mainstreaming to systemic inclusion), principles of systemic inclusion, and the developing role of the inclusion facilitator or specialist. Findings are reported through vignettes of three composite categories of inclusion specialists: "teacher with an empty classroom," "teacher without a classroom," and "teacher of teachers." Job descriptions and qualifications for inclusion specialists and their specific roles and responsibilities are also analyzed. Interviews with regular educators indicated they saw the specialist as either a "support" to their own efforts or as the "expert." Reflections by the author note that inclusion as practiced is almost entirely focused on students with disabilities and is characterized by the relocation of special education personnel and practice into general education classrooms. Appended are the two interview protocols. (Contains 27 references.) (DB)

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Inclusion Specialists:

Are they really fostering inclusion?

August 1995

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EC 305441

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INTRODUCTION

My Need for Further Investigation

Recent efforts to include students with disabilities into general education classrooms has led to the emergence of a new position for some educators. Sarah Cameron's research project, "What is an Inclusion Specialist?: A preliminary investigation," lays the framework for a closer examination of the job of "inclusion specialist". After reading her project, I realized that more information about the role of the inclusion specialist could provide me with insight into the changing field of special education. Furthermore, as a proponent of inclusion and as a future teacher, I was interested in exploring this position and the implications of its emergence on students with disabilities and teachers who are working in inclusive settings. Cameron's research indicates that inclusion specialists, while fulfilling a myriad of responsibilities and roles, might frequently inhibit the inclusion of students with disabilities. Continuing her investigation will help to clarify what people in this role actually do and the impact their work has on students and teachers. Also, important in this investigation is to explore the relationship between specialists and general educators.

Research Agenda

Cameron interviewed nine inclusion specialists. I planned to expand her investigation by observing and interviewing additional inclusion specialists and by conducting interviews with general educators working in inclusive classrooms. First, I wanted to gather and read the current literature on inclusion, paying particular attention to the descriptions of people with the title of "inclusion specialist" and to discussions about their working relationships with general educators. I also wanted to get a better understanding of the history of special education and how this history continues to impact educational reform and practice. Second, I decided to continue using the interview guide created by Cameron for inclusion specialists (see Appendix 1) but also to develop a second interview guide for general educators

(see Appendix 2), so that I might better understand teachers' perceptions and thoughts about the role inclusion specialists play in their classrooms. Third, I planned to conduct phone and in-person interviews with inclusion specialists, arrange for observations, and request from them written information about their positions--specifically their job descriptions. Finally, I hoped to arrange interviews with general educators who were referred to me by some of the specialists we had already contacted. I hoped through a literature review, document collection, and interviews and observations, that some of my questions about the roles and responsibilities of inclusion specialists would be answered. Furthermore, I hoped to expand Cameron's study and to gain a better understanding of the working relationships between inclusion specialists and general educators in the interest of creating educational opportunities for students with disabilities..

LITERATURE REVIEW

History

The history of special education is important to an understanding of recent reform efforts and educational approaches (Ferguson in press a & b; Taylor & Searl, 1987; Sarason & Doris, 1979). Current thinking around the treatment and education of people with disabilities has been shaped by this history, which continues to have an influence in how educators determine who will teach students with disabilities, where they will be taught and how services will be provided.

Emergence of Special Education

In the United States, during the colonial period, people with severe disabilities often did not survive past infancy, and those individuals with more mild disabilities who did live longer were cared for by relatives and neighbors. Their presence in the community was accepted because participation in the predominantly agricultural society did not require much technological skill or expertise. During the

nineteenth century, with the growth of urbanization, industrialization and immigration, people who formerly labored in farming moved to cities to work in the factories. The availability of agricultural work that had previously afforded people with disabilities membership in the community as productive citizens diminished. As industries grew, so did the demands grow for skilled workers in the marketplace. People with disabilities, whose skills were primarily related to agriculture, were unable to compete for the new jobs, and in many cases found themselves unable to contribute to their communities in ways that were valued by others (Taylor & Searl, 1987).

With the migration of people towards cities came new and challenging social problems:

> The combined effects of urbanization, industrialization and immigration resulted in the rise of the first large-scale social problems in American society: slums, unemployment, homeless children and adults, culture conflict, crime, delinquency, and, according to many, vice and immorality (Taylor & Searl, p. 13).

In response to these difficulties, the leaders of the time held the poor, the deviant and the disabled accountable. As a result, many of these people --deemed unfit and unable to productively contribute to the community --were committed to asylums, almshouses and institutions.

At the turn of the century, prompted in part by the need to remedy these social problems, to protect working children from unfair labor practices, to socialize youth to be better citizens, and to train them to be more productive workers, compulsory education laws were enacted. Before the passage of these laws, educational opportunities were limited to the privileged and upper class and to children with mild disabilities who were living in institutions (Taylor & Searl, 1987; Ferguson in press a; Sarason & Doris, 1979). These institutionalized children received little, if any, training, and individuals with severe disabilities were excluded entirely from formal instruction.

The compulsory education laws now made school attendance a requirement for *all* children, thus challenging the system to accommodate an increasingly diverse student population. Educators responded by creating a separate track of instruction for students who appeared not to "fit" the norm or who would likely fail with the current teaching methods. Even with the emergence of this parallel "special education" system individuals with severe disabilities remained unserved under the laws (Ferguson in press b; Sarason & Doris, 1979). Students with more severe disabilities were "excused" from compulsory education because they were perceived to be in need of custodial care and incapable of learning.

Recent Legislation

The exclusion of students with severe disabilities did not go unnoticed by parents, educators and the federal government. A heightened awareness of the abuses in institutions and the absence of these students in public schools led to the passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act in 1974 (P.L. 94-142). This act guaranteed a free and appropriate public education to all children, regardless of the severity of their disabilities. Later re-authorized and renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Act, this law ensures that all students are provided with the educational opportunity they deserve. The law is based on the following premises:

- A free, appropriate public education must be provided for all children, without cost to their parents and regardless of severity or type of disability;
- Protective, due process rights must be ensured for all children with disabilities;
- Education in the "least restrictive environment" must be provided, meaning that students with disabilities must be educated with children who are not handicapped, to the maximum extent possible;

- Individualized educational programming, in the form of an individualized education plan (IEP), must be developed; and
- Parental involvement is required for all decisions regarding the programming for students with special needs (NASBE, 1992).

With this legislation, students with moderate and severe disabilities moved into public schools and general and special educators were challenged to provide them with instruction. To meet what were considered the more specialized needs of these students, however, special education teachers became more specialized and the gulf between the parallel special and general education systems continued to increase (Ferguson, in press a). Historically, "special students" have been taught by "special teachers" in special education classrooms, and have remained isolated from their non-disabled peers, with little attention paid to the actual outcome of their education (NASBE, 1992). In many school districts today this practice is still followed.

The separation between general and special education was largely created by certain assumptions, shared by both disciplines, about students and their learning. Both special and general educators in many parts of the country continue to operate under the influence of these assumptions. They believe that:

- Students are responsible for their learning.
- When students don't learn, there is something wrong with them.
- Schools must figure out what's wrong with as much precision as possible so that students can be directed to the track, curriculum, teachers and classrooms that match their learning ability profile. Otherwise, no learning will occur (Ferguson, in press a, p. 4).

Today, these assumptions, held as "truths" by many, continue to encourage the evaluation and the segregation of students based on their "perceived inabilities". Educators remain separated, teaching only those students in their respective general and special education classrooms.

Steps to a Merged System of Education: From Mainstreaming to Systemic Inclusion

Various reform efforts--mainstreaming in the late 1960s, and continuing with integration and more recently special education initiated inclusion, have tried to create membership and better educational opportunity for students with disabilities who are segregated and isolated (NASBE, 1992; Ferguson in press a). In spite of the passage of P.L. 94-142 and IDEA, a large number of "special" students are still not fully participating members of their schools and communities (NASBE, 1992). The latest thinking among advocates for people with disabilities is that until the two systems of special and general education are merged, and all children are considered "regular", people with disabilities will continue to live, learn and work on the fringes of their communities. To remedy the continued inequities between students' educational opportunities, they propose that school districts adopt the philosophy and practices of "systemic inclusion". Systemic inclusion challenges the long held assumptions (Ferguson, in press a) by removing labels and categories as ways of grouping children, and by providing support to teachers to work together to develop curriculum and teaching practices that accommodate the needs of heterogeneous groups of learners. Before we take a closer look at systemic inclusion, it is appropriate to briefly discuss the reforms that have been steps on the way.

Mainstreaming

During the late 1960s, in an effort to educate youths with mild disabilities in the "main stream" thousands of students were moved into general education classrooms (Ferguson, in press a; NASBE, 1992). Still used today, the term "mainstreaming" is defined as the selective placement of students into general education classrooms for all, or at least part, of the school day (NASBE, 1992) and is based on the assumption that students who aren't "keeping up" with their peers in general education classes must be pulled out and given extra instruction and then must earn their way back into the mainstream.

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However, as students are pulled in and out of classrooms, they often miss important instructional time and material, leaving them with a fragmented education and little time to become fully participating members of their classes (NASBE, 1992). Indeed, many students are left feeling that they don't truly belong in either special or general education (Rogers, 1993; NASBE, 1992). Additionally, the mainstreaming debate focuses only on those students with mild disabilities and essentially ignores students with more severe disabilities. Finally, the mainstreaming approach operates on the assumption that students with disabilities must somehow be "repaired" or at least receive an education that eventually alleviates the effect of their disability. Consequently *where* students receive services becomes a critical issue (Ferguson, in press a).

Integration

In the years following P.L. 94-142, self-contained classroom teachers began to recognize how separate they and their students still really were, and to talk about the critical need for special education students, and teachers, to participate in school and neighborhood communities. Integration, with its philosophical origins in the civil rights movement, was initiated as a remedy to the exclusionary and stigmatizing practices that mainstreaming and self-contained programs encouraged (Ferguson in press a). But the concept of integration was not well-defined and did not suggest fundamental strategies for changing exclusionary practices (Ferguson in press a; NASBE, 1992). Educators found that simply moving students into general education classrooms did not ensure their participation or membership. Services were offered in a continuum of locations, which resulted in further segregation and little change in many students' experiences at school (Ferguson, in press a). The "pull-out" method of instruction, where students are taken to resource rooms or other specialized classrooms, and the practice of grouping all "special" students together in general education classrooms with special education assistants giving them instruction, perpetuates the assumption that only "special" teachers with "special" material and

training can provide these students with what they need (Ferguson, in press a & b). Integration also contains a critical flaw in its logic. As Ferguson explains, "In order to be 'integrated' one must first be segregated" (in press b, p. 3). Today, versions of this "pull-out" and "push back-in" model still leave students unable to fully participate with their peers in general education classrooms, and perpetuates the assumption that they are somehow "irregular" and in need of repair.

Special Education Inclusion

Inclusion emerged in the 1980s as a special education reform to move students with disabilities from separate classes into general education classrooms in their neighborhood schools (Ferguson in press a & b). Proponents of inclusion envisioned school and community environments which would accommodate the unique and individual needs of all students, and which would facilitate desired learning outcomes for them (NASBE, 1992; Stainback & Stainback, 1990).

Early efforts at inclusive education provided some students and educators with positive and satisfying experiences. Ferguson (in press b) describes her son's high school drama class:

> Not only did he learn to "fly", trusting others to lift and toss him in the air (not an easy thing for someone who has little control over his body), he also memorized lines and delivered them during exams, learned to interact more comfortably and spontaneously with classmates and teachers....Classmates, puzzled, and perhaps "put off" by him at the beginning of the year creatively incorporated him into enough of their improvisations and activities to be able to nominate him at the end of the year as one of the students that had not only shown progress, but also showed promise as an actor (p. 4).

Some general education teachers, who were initially reluctant to include students with disabilities into their classrooms have described feelings of accomplishment and changes in attitudes. One teacher said,

" I think I started looking at it as, I'm the teacher here.....I'm responsible for every other student. I should be responsible for this student too." Another said, "I started seeing him as a little boy. I started feeling that he's a person too. He's a student. Why should I not teach him? He's in my class. That's my responsibility, I'm a teacher!" (Giangreco et al., in press, p. 365).

It is clear, through descriptions like these, that some positive changes are occurring for students with disabilities, but Ferguson (in press a & b) notes that all experiences have not been so satisfying and some could be described as "pretty good integration" at best. Even students who spend all or most of their day in general education classrooms are often not members of their classes. Often, this is due not to their disability, but to *what* they are doing, and to *who* is providing them with instruction, (Ferguson, in press a & b). Some "included" students receive much of their teaching from assistants and support people rather than from the classroom teacher. The activities they do, which are often designed by special educators, don't coincide with classroom schedules and often cause interruptions. These students, sometimes "velcroed" to a special adult, seem to be *in* the class but not *of* the class (Ferguson in press a). In these situations, we have succeeded in moving special education into the general classroom, but have maintained its separate practices and outcomes for students with disabilities. Ferguson (in press a, p.9) describes this type of inclusion. "Sometimes special education initiated inclusion results in students getting into the general education classroom, but still doing all the same "different" things they did in separate places."

Inclusion, when implemented in this manner validates and perpetuates the assumptions outlined earlier.

In its' comprehensive report, "Winners All: A Call For Inclusive Schools" (NASBE, 1992) the National Association of State Boards of Education calls for a fundamental shift in the way educational services for all children are delivered. The report challenges the practices of mainstreaming and integration and outlines what it sees as the failure of current educational approaches to ensure good outcomes for students, particularly those with disabilities. Underlying this failure is the continuing, but

unnecessary, segregation and labeling of students with disabilities and the fragmented school life many students experience as a result of the dual parallel systems of special and general education. The existence of dual systems of education implies that there are two groups of students, each needing different instructional methods, teachers and services. The approach of systemic inclusion does not require prior separation, but rather assumes that students with disabilities, starting when they enter school, should be afforded the educational opportunity and membership given to their non-disabled peers.

NASBE's call for an inclusive system that strives to produce better outcomes for *all* students requires reform beyond the relocation of special education students and services into general education classrooms. Ferguson stresses the need for "systemic inclusion" where the separate spheres of special and general education merge to form a cohesive system designed to serve all children and youth (Ferguson in press a & b).

Envisioning Systemic Inclusion

Inclusive schools are places where the diverse needs of all students are accommodated and their full participation and membership are supported. Unlike mainstreaming, integration and special education initiated inclusion, systemic inclusion does not focus on aiding just one group of individuals, but instead operates with the belief that all students should be supported to develop their talents and competence. Stainback and Stainback (1990) explain:

> An inclusive school is a place where everyone belongs, is accepted, supports, and is supported by his or her peers and other members of the school community in the course of having his or her educational needs met (p. 3).

Inclusive schooling requires major structural change and a fundamental shift in the way educators deliver instruction to all students.

Rationale for a Merger

There is disagreement among educators about the feasibility and appropriateness of merging the two tracks of education (Murphy, in press; Shanker, in press; Ferguson, in press a). Opponents to the merger talk about untrained teachers, and overcrowding in general education classrooms as two barriers to the accommodation of more diversity. The deletion of some services for students with disabilities gives rise to concerns about students being "dumped" into classrooms without supports. Rogers, in her article, "The Inclusion Revolution" (Rogers in press), cites the results of inclusion done inappropriately:

> In one school claiming to be using inclusion, an observer noted 44 second graders watching a filmstrip as a science lesson with only one teacher in the room. The 44 children included a group of special education students, a group of limited English proficient students, and a "regular" class (p. 3).

Clearly, this does not illustrate what advocates of systemic inclusion have in mind.

Systemic inclusion, if it is going to work, must make services available to everyone without having those services tied to "special" places or people. Ferguson explains (in press a):

> The message of systemic inclusion is that old practices, emphasizing as they did the clear relationship between ability, service, and place, will become replaced not so much by a loss of anything, as by the provision of more, more effectively delivered, to all students by groups of teachers with different abilities and expertise working together (p. 12).

Advocates for a merger argue that if the two systems of special and general education remain separate, so too, will the students and educators relegated to each sphere. They further argue that the dual system approach is inefficient, particularly when resources are scarce, because services are often duplicated. As the two systems merge, educators will be better able to jointly provide educational

programs that benefit all children. This encourages membership of students and an increased likelihood that they will find inclusion in a more diverse learning environment (Stainback & Stainback, 1990; NASBE 1992; Rogers, in press; Ferguson in press a & b).

Professional Collaboration, Training & Development

NASBE recommends that state boards of education should lead the way in creating a new belief system and vision for how schools will operate. They encourage establishing joint training and professional development programs to instruct educators how to better work with heterogeneous groups of learners, and with each other. Additionally, they stress the need to disassemble the separate funding tracks that direct the programming and placement of individual students and teachers. A further recommendation is that money should be allocated to support students in classrooms that foster individual learning and the use of their abilities. It is hoped that these changes will improve student outcomes and foster collaboration between general and special educators.

Collaboration is essential to systemic inclusion. The historic separation of special and general educators has led to competition rather than cooperation, the stigmatizing ownership of students, and a duplication of services (Stainback & Stainback, in press). Neither special nor general education *alone* can adequately or efficiently provide the opportunities, methods and expertise necessary to meet the needs of every student. Cooperative teams of teachers with various skills and knowledge can better meet the diverse needs of their students by working together to tailor their instruction. Ferguson describes this collaboration (in press a):

> [Special and general educators] are working together to use a wide variety of educational and other "natural" materials to design learning that is individually tailored to each student's unique mix of interests, abilities, and learning histories (p. 15).

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By working together teachers can shift their attention from providing *services* to individual groups of students to providing *supports* to more students. They can also help each other to change environmental constraints that impede students' learning and participation.

Creating Networks of Support

Many school districts have already recognized the importance of providing networks of supports for teachers, students and parents (Stainback & Stainback & Harris, 1989). These networks allow for the open exchange of ideas and the sharing of information among people with a variety of skills, expertise and backgrounds. Utilizing both formal and informal supports, these individuals, along with administrators and the community members, are disintegrating the barriers associated with the parallel systems of education and are beginning to create a common conceptual framework to guide themselves through the transition to more inclusive schooling (Stainback & Stainback, 1990). More importantly, however, is the foundation they are creating for students to form their own natural support networks.

The benefits of supportive networks can be seen at many levels of the educational structure. General and special educators are working more closely together as joint planning and inservice times become more available through the schedule re-structuring efforts of principals and school boards (Raywid, in press; Thousand & Villa, 1992). By pooling their skill, resources, and knowledge, these educators are designing curriculum and instruction to meet the needs of a broader range of learners. Administrators, along with school boards and community members, are taking active roles in the creation of mission statements and policies that are reflective of the goals of systemic inclusion. Higher learning institutions are working collaboratively with primary and secondary schools to develop training programs and classes about inclusion for new teachers, parents and current educators. These classes provide forums of discussion about ways to create better and richer curriculum for all students. These ideas and strategies are brought back to classrooms where students are now more heterogeneously

grouped, which fosters cooperation and friendships between students who were formerly separated from each other. Supports such as Circle of Friends and peer buddy systems have emerged to encourage positive interaction between students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers (Villa & Thousand, 1988). By involving administrators, community volunteers, parents, educators and students, school districts are working to ensure that the philosophy of inclusion can move from schools into the communities, making the transition from school to work easier. To assist in the coordination and development of these supports, some districts have created the position of "inclusion specialist" (Stainback & Stainback, 1990).

The Emergence of A New Role

Through collaboration with other educators, and support to teachers and students, the main objective of the "inclusion facilitator" is to encourage and promote the creation of inclusive school environments (Stainback & Stainback, 1990). In researching this position I found several descriptions and a variety of labels and titles for the job. Additionally, included in some of the literature were some strategies for effectively fulfilling the duties of this position. While specific data and documentation is scarce, I did find some discussion about the practices of inclusion facilitators who are currently working in schools. There is some discrepancy between the actual practices of inclusion facilitators in these districts and what advocates for this position recommend. The central points outlined in the literature about this job follow.

Central Features of the Job

Descriptions of the roles and responsibilities of "inclusion specialists" vary as do their titles. Sometimes called "integration facilitators" or "support facilitators", these professionals are described most consistently as the coordinators, developers and organizers of support for students and teachers in inclusive settings (Stainback & Stainback, 1989; Stainback & Stainback & Harris, 1989; Tashie, et. al.

1993). They have also been described as the adaptors of curriculum and the brokers of resources (Ferguson, et. al. 1992). Mentioned in all of these descriptions was the importance of the inclusion specialist's ability to effectively collaborate with parents and other educators and to successfully provide the technological assistance and the program coordination needed for inclusion. Of equal importance, is the inclusion facilitator's skill at accessing and providing support to teachers and students in inclusive settings.

Suggested Strategies

The literature suggests that as the systems of special and general education merge it is necessary to employ inclusion facilitators to coordinate and promote the supportive networks utilized by teachers and students in general education classrooms. Anyone knowledgeable in the development and encouragement of supports and supportive relationships can assume this role, including special educators, consultants or supervisors (Stainback & Stainback, 1990).

The literature describes three main strategies for inclusion facilitators to use when fulfilling their duties. First, the inclusion facilitator should be knowledgeable about what supports and resources are in existence. It is the facilitator's job to access those supports and inform school community members about their availability. Second, the inclusion facilitator's work should be "consumer driven". In other words, the requests and wishes of parents, students and teachers should direct the allocation and provision of those supports. To do this effectively, facilitators should be familiar with daily routines and curriculum in classrooms where they are working so that their presence does not impede or distract from the overall process of the classroom. They should be aware of students' learning styles and seek out information from parents about what they want for their child. Third, inclusion facilitators should be flexible and recognize when their support is no longer needed. As teachers and students become more adept at supporting each other, more natural support networks are created, lessening the need for the

facilitator's presence. Using all three of these strategies, the facilitator should act as a "team member" rather than as an expert or supervisor (Stainback & Stainback, 1990; Tashie, et. al., 1993). This encourages an atmosphere of unity and cooperation needed in the move towards more inclusive schooling.

In keeping with the ideas and goals of systemic inclusion, advocates for this position stress the need for inclusion facilitators to focus on the successful inclusion of *all* students (Stainback & Stainback & Harris, 1989; Tashie, et. al. 1993). Stainback & Stainback (1990) note that while the position was originally adopted to encourage the inclusion of students with disabilities, it has evolved to now address the membership and participation of a broader range of learners. They recognize the problems with tying inclusion facilitators to one group of students. The Stainbacks explain:

> When facilitators were first used in schools, they were generally employed to work only with students classified as having disabilities. They often followed or shadowed these students around in regular class and school settings. This tended to draw attention to and set such students apart from their peers, interfering with the development of natural supports or friendships (p. 33-34)

They also note that since the mid-1980s, inclusion facilitators, acting as team teachers and collaborators, are being employed to support *all* students rather than strictly focusing on fitting certain students "into the mainstream". While this is certainly consistent with emerging concerns, some recent literature suggests that this kind of overall shift in role is optimistic (Cameron, 1994; Alcock, 1995).

Philosophy & Practice

As recently as 1994, one researcher found that many people filling the role of inclusion facilitator still focus most of their efforts towards the inclusion of students with disabilities into general education classrooms (Cameron, 1994). This study describes the role of inclusion facilitators in two

ways: teachers without classrooms and consultants working with adults. As teachers, they are called upon to address the specific needs of students with disabilities, often in "pull-out" situations, who for one reason or another still don't "fit" into general education classrooms. As consultants, they work almost exclusively with adults to modify and adapt curriculum for students, often with very little first hand knowledge or experience with the students they are asked to support. Yet they frequently maintain responsibility for these students, inhibiting the efforts of general education teachers to take responsibility and "ownership" and perpetuating the assumption that some students need "special" help and material. Contrary to the suggestion that this role has evolved to include working with all students (Stainback & Stainback, 1990), Cameron found that many inclusion specialists still see themselves responsible only for the academic and social needs of students with disabilities. Indeed, Cameron asserts that the practices of these some of these inclusion facilitators may actually impede the ability of students to be fully participating members of their schools.

In an effort to teach and explain the role of the inclusion facilitator and better define inclusion, some advocates for this position have created training and informational videos (Dover, 1994; NY Partnership for Statewide Systems Change Project, Goodwin & Wurzburg, 1993) The focus of all of these videos tends to be about the inclusion of students with disabilities into general education classrooms rather than on inclusive practices in general. They are frequently an opportunity for teachers and school officials to talk about what inclusion has meant to them and their students, particularly students with disabilities. Often, children with disabilities appear to be participating quite easily with their non-disabled peers and to be getting support from a variety of professionals and paraprofessionals, but it is never clear who is actually responsible for their learning (NY Partnership for Statewide Systems Change Project 1995; Goodwin & Wurzburg, 1993). Phrases such as "these special students" or "my inclusion students" seem to reveal the overall philosophy dictating their inclusion efforts. In their work to promote inclusive schooling, perhaps they have succeeded in creating a new label for students with

disabilities, "the included student", and in perpetuating the assumptions that go along with special education initiated inclusion outlined earlier.

Consistent with Cameron's research, the inclusion facilitators in these videos appear to concentrate on the needs of only those students labeled with disabilities. Often they refer to students with disabilities as "their students", challenging the assertion by Stainback and Stainback (1990) that these facilitators are now working with a broader range of learners. Also, contrary to what the literature recommends, it appears that the general education teachers in these classrooms have not maintained responsibility for all the students in their room. The students with disabilities are separated by their new labels, different teachers and different curriculum. The tapes (Dover, 1994) ignore the larger message of systemic inclusion, that *all* teachers must work together to support the diverse learning needs of *all* students.

Questions Still Unanswered

These depictions of inclusion and the inclusion facilitator role leave one wondering how much of a merger has actually taken place between special and general education, and how much the role of inclusion facilitator has actually evolved towards serving all students. Is the current role of these professionals to facilitate the inclusion of every student, or is the position being used to remediate the perceived problems associated with having students with disabilities in general education classrooms? If it is the latter, are we not replicating the historical error by once again separating students by ability and tying their needs to certain people and places? In trying to disassemble the separate tracks of education and merge the two, have we created a new one? Are students with disabilities now on the "inclusion track"?

RESEARCHER'S PERSPECTIVE

These questions and the literature's descriptions of the recently adopted position of inclusion facilitator prompted me to think about my previous experiences as an advocate and my future role as an educator. After visiting a broad range of classrooms throughout Oregon, I have questions about the current and emerging roles of special education teachers with respect to educational reform. The movement nationwide to merge special and general education and the transition towards more inclusive schooling are the impetus for broad-based change that is redefining the roles of all teachers. Presently I am a student in the Specialized Training Program at the University of Oregon and will graduate with a Master's degree in Special Education and a Severely Handicapped Learner Endorsement. With the changing dynamics of special education and educational reform, I frequently wonder what I will do with my new qualifications and what opportunities will be available to me as a first year teacher.

The positions special education teachers hold vary among districts and schools. However, through my observations, I've noticed four approaches special education teachers use as they try to meet their students' academic needs. Whereas one teacher may move from classroom to classroom working with individual students or small groups, another may maintain a self-contained classroom where instruction is reserved for students labeled as more severely disabled. Still, others work as resource room teachers providing behavioral and more intense instructional support. Finally, I have seen classrooms where a team of general and special educators together provide instruction to diverse groups of learners.

Through my practicum and substitute experiences I've witnessed all of these roles performed in a variety of ways. Only the team teaching model is particularly appealing to me. In the first three approaches, teachers are often limited to educating students labeled with disabilities in secluded or isolated settings. The opportunity to work with other teachers and students is usually minimal. While the services these teachers provide are important, I want very much to teach a more diverse student

population while utilizing an inclusive and collaborative model demonstrated by the team teaching approach. This approach offers unlimited potential for teachers to capitalize on resources, pool knowledge and develop curriculum appropriate for all students. More importantly, I believe this model facilitates the move towards inclusive education.

My previous experience as an advocate within a legal and social service system for families experiencing abuse helped me understand the dynamics of a service program. Sometimes those programs originally designed to assist people can inadvertently undermine efforts towards change and create barriers to success. I was frustrated by programs that left survivors of abuse excluded from their communities and limited their access to services. Similarly, I am concerned about the current practices that exclude children with disabilities from the general education population and the community as well. Barriers, such as isolation, lack of support and a dual system of education, all contribute to an environment not particularly conducive to learning. This in turn helped me to determine that while I want very much to teach, I also want to be a facilitator of change within any school that I choose to work.

As described in the literature, the recently developed position of inclusion specialist appears to be one way educators are trying to remedy the exclusion of some students from their school community. My research project along with coursework and communication with educators in small cooperative learning groups provided me with an opportunity to explore and better understand collaboration and what is needed to encourage and facilitate inclusion of all students.

METHODS

The Research

This investigation utilized methods outlined by Cameron to extend and preserve the continuity of the research. In accordance with her approach, document collection, observations, and interviews were used to gather information about inclusion, the roles and responsibilities of inclusion specialists, and the

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thoughts and perceptions of general educators working in inclusive settings. Additionally, through casual conversations, observations and interviews with students, teachers, and personnel at the University of Oregon, I collected information about what inclusion looks like in different districts. Each part of the investigation provided different kinds of information with perspectives from a variety of people working in different settings.

Observations

Observations were done on four people fulfilling the role of inclusion specialist in Oregon and one in Washington. The titles for this position varied, but each person functioned in their words as a facilitator of inclusion. Districts with some type of an inclusion model in place were initially contacted by Cameron and the names of inclusion specialists were forwarded to me as potential participants in the study. I contacted them by phone and mail to briefly explain the study and information I would be seeking. All of the specialists I observed signed consent to participate forms designed by Cameron. Confidentiality was assured by the measures outlined in the consent form (e.g. pseudonyms, audio tape destruction).

Observations were conducted by shadowing participants throughout one work day. This assisted in my understanding of the roles and responsibilities of inclusion specialists. It also provided an opportunity to informally talk to people working with inclusion specialists including general educators who would potentially take part in the study. The place and time of the observations depended on the participants' schedule. In each case, observations began in the morning at a school or office designated by the facilitator. Interviews took place at a convenient time during the day usually at the beginning of the observation or over a lunch break ranging from 45 minutes to an hour.

Throughout the observation, activities of the inclusion specialist were recorded on observation forms similar to those used in Cameron's study. The four columns on the form: activity/task being

performed, time and length of activity, with whom the activity occurred, and notes about my observations allowed for the accurate and efficient recording of chronological data.

Document Collection

The collection of documents continued throughout the study. I solicited job descriptions from each of the inclusion specialists interviewed. Also, I requested any other relevant job related material that they felt comfortable forwarding. A total of seven job descriptions from inclusion specialists were received. They included one from a special education director acting in the role of facilitator, two that were outdated and in the process of revision and four descriptions currently in use. Two specialists had no job descriptions and one of them was in the process of creating her own. I also collected one resume and one job listing that was used in the job recruitment of one participant. One person provided me with her weekly schedule outlining when and where she went throughout a five-day week. Finally, I collected related documents pertaining to inclusion and the work of inclusion specialists. This included items such as a new updated IEP form, and policies, procedures and mission statements of their various districts.

Interviews

The two strands of the study required that I conduct two separate rounds of interviews, one with inclusion specialists and a second with general educators. Table 1 reflects a compilation of my findings about inclusion specialists and general educators as well as Cameron's data from her research (see Table 1). All the interview participants signed consent to participate forms and were apprised of the nature of the study prior to being interviewed. All seventeen interviews were tape recorded and later transcribed.

The first ten interviews were conducted using the guide in Appendix 1 for inclusion specialists. Five in-person interviews in the state of Oregon and five telephone interviews outside of Oregon were completed across a six month span of time. For consistency between the two studies, I conducted the first two interviews with inclusion facilitators located by Sarah Cameron and with her assistance. The

remaining eight interviews with facilitators were as follows: one with a former staff member at the University of Oregon now fulfilling the job of inclusion facilitator, two with people introduced to me at conferences about inclusion, and five with specialists initially contacted by Cameron. Four participants provided me with the names of general educators working with them who were eventually interviewed for the study. The interviews varied in length from 45 minutes to an hour and a half.

The second round of interviews with seven general educators, using the interview guide in Appendix 2, were conducted over a three month timespan. Five interviews were done in person and two were completed over the phone. All interviews done in person took place in the teachers' classrooms during after school hours except for one brief interview done during a lunch period with students present in the classroom. A number of the teachers expressed concern over the length of the interview so I adjusted my questioning accordingly and shortened the interview time to one half hour when necessary. One of the teachers agreed to a 45 minute interview, but when I arrived she explained that she could meet me for only 20 minutes. At their request, two of the educators. were interviewed together.

Table 1 Continued
Information about Observations and
Interviews with Inclusion Specialists and General Educators

†Most recent research participants

Contact (and others)	Job Title	Type of Community	Type of Contact	Jurisdiction	Documents Collected	Professional Work Experience
Anita (clsrm. & resc. tchrs. EAs & principal)	Support Specialist (unofficial title)	Small town	Two interviews One day of observation	Serves elementary schools (5) and early intervention program within district	Current and proposed job descriptions Qualifications FTE schedule	3 years as Inclusion Specialist
Betty Supp. Ed. Team clsrm. tchrs. EAs, parents, students)	Supported Education Consult (official ESD title)	Metropolitan area	Two interviews One Day of observation	Employed by ESD Works with team of 3 consultants Time contracted by individual districts	Inclusion literature Qualifications FTE schedule and service guidelines Personal calendar	5 years as self contained SPED teacher 3 years SPED consultant 4 years Supp. Ed. Cnslt.
Cecilia (E.A.s, students, principal & parent)	Inclusion Facilitator	Small town	Interview One day of observation (8 1/2 hrs.)	Employed by district Serving 2 (next year 3) elementary schools	Qualifications Old job description Sample of mapping Personal calendar	1 year in self cont. SPED classroom
Deborah	Supported Ed. Spec. (official title)	Small town	One interview in person 1 1/2 hrs	Employed by school district (team of 2)	Draft of new job description	3 years as Inclusion Specialist
Elizabeth (SPED drctr.)	Support Specialist (official title)	Small town	One interview in person (1 hr.)	Employed by a district, works in a high school	Skeletal idea of potential description	4 yrs. P.E. teacher 1 yr. teacher of self contained SPED rm. 1 yr. Supp. Ed. Spec.

Table 1 Continued
Information about Observations and
Interviews with Inclusion Specialists and General Educators

†Most recent research participants

Contact (and others)	Job Title	Type of Community	Type of Contact	Jurisdiction	Documents Collected	Professional Work Experience
Franklin	SPED Dir. (Juanita is Supp. Specialist)	Small town	Brief conversation (30 min.)	Special Ed. Director	Skeletal idea of potential job description	Not Available
Georgene	HL teach. (wrks w/ supp. spec)	Small town	Phone interview (30min.)	High school SPED teacher	None	1 yr. as Handicapped Learner Specialist
Heather	ESD suprv (hiring new case mgrs.)	Large town	Brief conversation (15 min.)	ESD Special Ed.Supervisor	Qualifications Job descriptions	3 yrs. experience w/ESD classroom Master's degree
Isabelle	Supp. Ed.Consult (official title)	Metropolitan area	Phone interview (30 min.)	Employed by ESD Contracted by districts	Same as Betty's	5 yrs SPED teacher, 2 yrs. Supp Ed. Consult.
†Crystal	Supported Education Consultant	Metropolitan area	One interview for 1 hr. One day observation(8 hrs)	Employed by ESD Works with team of 3 consultants Time contracted by individual districts	Job description (outdated) Inclusion literature Historical info. service guidelines	Residential treatment. Learning Specialist Consultant to self-contained classroom
†Darla	District Learning Specialist Educational Facilitator	Small Town on edge of large Metropolitan area	Interview in-person One day observation (7 hrs.)	Employed by district	Sample of Mapping Continuum of Services, Job description	Self-contained classroom teacher
†Ellie	District SPED Coordinator	Small City	Phone interview for 1 1/2 hrs.	Employed by District	District Mission Statement Inclusion Articles Job descriptions	2 years in classroom. Director ESL Program District SPED Coordinator
†Felipe	SPED Specialist Chapter 1 Coordinator	Small Town	Interview in-person 1 hour	Employed by elementary school	None	PE teacher Approx. 10 years as teacher 1 year specialist
†Giselle	Collaboration Consultant	Metropolitan Area	Phone interview 1 hour	5 elementary schools	Job Description Grading Information	Teacher in self contained Resource room teacher 1 year collaborating specialist
†Hillary	Supported ed. Consultant, Autism Specialist	Small City	Two interviews (in person (Total 1 hr. 45 min.), Five hour observation	1 elementary school as consultant & more as specialist.	None	3 years autism training. Master's SPED, SHL Endorse.
†Irene	Inclusion Teacher	Medium-sized urban city	One hour phone interview	3 elementary schools	Job listing	Teacher in SPED classroom 3 years, SHL Basic Elementary Ed. Credential and Multiple Subjects Credential.
†Jeannie	Teacher Consultant	Medium sized city	Interview 45 min. & Observation 6 hours	Employed by ESD. 17 schools Service to all grade levels	Weekly Sched. Job Descript.(outdated) Resume	Reg Ed. Teacher 9 years Tutor for 2 years for SED students
†Kristen	Teacher of Inclusion	Small Town	Interview 1 hour	Employed by District 3 schools	Updated IEP form Job description	Occupational Therapist, SPED Teacher in self-contained classroom 20 total years with students w/ disabilities
†Leo	Educational Specialist	Small Town	One hour phone interview One day observation	Employed by district	Job descript..Short Narrative	Six years as SPED teacher in inclusive pre-school Juvenile Detention Facility. Three years teaching at a middle school
†Martha (Works with Betty)	General Educator	Metropolitan Area	Interview in-person for 1 1/2 hrs.	Elementary School First and second grade split classroom	None Requested	Head Start teacher for 8 years General Ed. teacher for 5 years
†Nancy (works with Jeannie)	General Educator	Small Town	20 minute interview in-person	Elementary School Third grade classroom	None Requested	Instructional Assistant Chapter One Kindergarten Teacher Third grade Teacher

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Table 1 Continued
Information about Observations and
Interviews with Inclusion Specialists and General Educators

†Most recent research participants

Contact (and others)	Job Title	Type of Community	Type of Contact	Jurisdiction	Documents Collected	Professional Work Experience
†Olivia (works with Crystal)	General Educator	Metropolitan Area	One hour interview	Elementary School Fifth grade classroom	None Requested	General Ed. teacher for 23 1/2 years
†Penny (works with Felipe)	General Educator	Small Town	One hour interview with Renee in-person	Elementary School First and second grade split classroom	None Requested	General Education Teacher for 11 years
†Renee (works with Felipe)	General Educator	Small Town	One hour interview with Penny in-person	Elementary School First and second grade split classroom	None Requested	Two years as a specialist Three years as a General Educator
†Sally (works with Betty)	General Educator	Metropolitan Area	30 minute phone interview	Elementary School First, second, and third grade classroom	None Requested	Special Educator for 21 years. Full inclusion in multi-age classroom for 3 years
†Tasha (works with Leo)	General Educator	Small Town	30 minute phone interview	Elementary School Second Grade Classroom	None Requested	General Educator for 11 years

Data Analysis

After completing each of my interviews and observations, I wrote brief memos about each inclusion specialist or general educator. These memos served a dual purpose. First, they provided me with a way to reflect upon the information I had just gathered. I was able to write down distinguishing comments and impressions that I had of the individual participants which helped me to clarify their responsibilities and roles. Sometimes this meant writing down specific comments that struck me as important or interesting. At other times I talked about certain interactions that the educators had with students, other educators or myself. Second, as I organized and thought about what my final project might look like, these memos served as reminders to me about what I heard and learned from teachers and specialists. I was able to go back to the memos and re-visit my time with participants quickly when I began the process of writing the final project.

By sorting and categorizing my transcriptions, I was able to get a clearer picture of the inclusion specialists I spoke with. After reading my memos and reviewing my transcriptions, I found that I could divide much of the specialist data into three areas: 1) What does inclusion look like in their districts or schools? 2) What do they say about their relationships with other educators? and 3) How do inclusion

specialists describe their actual duties? These three questions, which focused on inclusion, the specialists' relationships with teachers, and their duties, emerged as central themes running throughout the transcriptions. They were frequently discussed and were critical to my understanding of inclusion specialists' and general educators' roles in inclusive settings.

FINDINGS

Through document collection, observations and interviews, I learned about the roles and responsibilities of inclusion specialists currently working in schools. These techniques assisted in my overall organization and analysis. I found that by taking the time to reflect upon and discuss my data, I could better understand the information I was collecting and organize it in a way that I could easily and efficiently retrieve it. Additionally, by collecting and reviewing the job descriptions of inclusion specialists, I learned more about the qualifications and skills school districts require when seeking to employ people for this position. Through interviewing general educators working with inclusion specialists, I gained a better understanding of the relationship between the two. Teachers also shared with me their perceptions about the roles of inclusion specialists and their thoughts about what supports they felt were important for including students with disabilities in their classrooms.

Two types of inclusion specialists were described by Cameron (1994): teachers with an empty classroom and consultants working with adults. Through her interviews and observations of nine inclusion specialists, she delineated the roles and responsibilities of these individuals and their impact on students in inclusive classrooms.

Through my interviews and observations, I expanded Cameron's research by adding a third type of inclusion specialist, "the teacher without a classroom". I also found that many of my participants were able to talk about a fourth type of inclusion specialist, which focuses on a broader range of learners, similar to the role described by Stainback and Stainback (1990). Together with the data from Cameron's study, a more detailed picture emerges of inclusion specialists as: 1) teachers with empty classrooms, 2)

teachers without classrooms, 3) new teachers of teachers and, 4) with less clarity, the role of broader educational consultants.

Merging the Data

Four of the ten inclusion specialists that I contacted fit the description of "teacher with an empty classroom" and "teacher without a classroom". Formerly self-contained or resource room teachers, two of these specialists were assigned classrooms but no children to fill them. The other two had no classroom of their own, but rather worked out of offices in schools or administrative buildings. The latter often traveled to multiple schools during their workday as they attempted to fulfill their responsibilities. As inclusion specialists, both types continued to address the academic needs of students with disabilities but with the additional challenge of working in numerous settings and classrooms.

Both the "teachers with an empty classroom" and "teachers without a classroom" acted as secretaries, supervisors, trainers, consultants and advocates. They were often responsible for writing the IEPs for "included" students and adapting unfamiliar general education curriculum and material to fit the individual needs of these students. Additionally, through their supervision and training of educational assistants they were responsible for ensuring that the academic needs of those students were being met in the general education classroom. They often found themselves advocating for these same students when providing consultation to teachers who were uncomfortable about having students with disabilities in their classrooms or believed themselves untrained in meeting their physical and academic needs.

Attempting to effectively fulfill these roles was difficult for the specialists I spoke to. Unhappy in their new positions and dissatisfied with being removed from their students, they continued to approach the job through their special education training by teaching small homogeneous groups of students with disabilities within the general education classrooms or by pulling students out of classrooms. Overwhelmed with their various responsibilities, they frequently found little time to

collaborate with classroom teachers and instead focused their efforts at communicating with the assistants assigned to the "included" students.

The remaining six inclusion specialists I interviewed fit into the "consultant working with adults" definition. I describe them as "teachers of teachers". Sometimes referred to as "inclusion teachers" or "teachers of inclusion", these specialists, also former special educators, spent most of their time working with adults in inclusive settings. Their responsibilities varied from scheduling and providing support to educational assistants to creating and managing support networks for students and teachers. Often, they worked for one or more districts moving towards inclusion in offices outside the school building with teams of other facilitators.

Individuals filling the role of "teacher of teachers" focused their efforts on educating other adults about inclusive practices and students with disabilities. Acting as "experts" these specialists provided assistance and consultative support about students with disabilities to teachers and assistants in general education classrooms. As they set up behavior plans, monitored IEP goals and modeled teaching techniques for adults, these specialists relied on their training as special educators and their knowledge of the laws associated with having students with disabilities in public school to guide them in fulfilling their responsibilities. They saw their role as important because of the limited knowledge they believed general educators had about these laws and students with disabilities needs in general.

In support of the Stainbacks' (1990) argument that inclusion specialists evolve to support the inclusion of all students, I found some specialists amenable to the idea of working with a broader range of learners. While I didn't observe any inclusion specialists working with non-disabled students, a number of the specialists I interviewed described their willingness to work with these students if asked to by other educators, which led to this new title of "broader educational consultant". Jeannie spoke about the policy she and her ESD office have about who gets services. "We have no limitation on who we can talk about....I would not want to sit glued to one kid because they are my identified student" (p. 15).

Jeannie schedules time each month with some of the seventeen schools she works in to be available for teachers to come to her for consultation about any student the teacher wants to talk about. While she does not feel that she is limited to speaking only about students identified as disabled, she admitted that the large number of schools and students she has contact with prohibits her from doing much more than short-term planning or crisis management. This feeling of being overwhelmed was repeated by all the inclusion specialists I spoke to. Their willingness to provide services to other students was overridden by the fact that their caseloads were already overflowing with students with disabilities. In order to try and be more effective, inclusion specialists found it necessary to limit most of their work to students with disabilities and only work with students without disabilities if specifically asked to by other educators.

While many of the inclusion specialists were working very hard to fill these roles, I question the effectiveness of working only with students with disabilities and their role as "expert" around these students. By remaining the "experts" for the academic, physical and behavioral needs of students labeled with disabilities, teachers often rely upon these specialists to solve the everyday problems or to answer questions they have about these students. These "experts" provide the majority of curriculum material and support for students with disabilities. This perpetuates the assumption that some students needs are so unique that only "special" teachers can accommodate them. Frequently in this role, inclusion specialists become barriers to the creation of more natural supports leaving students isolated and set apart in their new classrooms. Grounded in special education, the roles of "teachers without classrooms", the "teachers with empty classrooms" and the "teacher of teachers" do not adequately work to address the needs of all students as the literature recommends.

To best illustrate the roles and central features of the "teacher with an empty classroom" the "teacher without a classroom", and the "teacher of teachers", I found it useful to combine some of the

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information about the specialists I interviewed into composite sketches. The following section is an introduction to these composite inclusion specialists.

Composite Inclusion Specialists

While I chose to categorize these specialists based on their primary responsibilities and activities, I realize that none of the specialists I interviewed or observed fit completely into one type or another, but rather embody characteristics associated with the first three types. These composite characters reflect what a typical "teacher with an empty classroom", "teacher without a classroom" and "teacher of teachers" might look like. Additionally, using the information I collected about actual specialists' past experience, training and educational background, I invented brief histories and job descriptions for these characters.

The first composite character, Ben, reflects the central features of a "teacher with an empty classroom". The second character, Joni, reflects the central features of a "teacher without a classroom", and the third composite person, Sonia, depicts the central characteristics of a "teacher of teachers".

Biographical Sketches of Composite Inclusion Specialists

A Little About Ben-- "Teacher with an Empty Classroom"

After receiving his Handicapped Learner Endorsement and a Master's degree in special education, Ben was hired almost immediately as a resource room teacher at McKenzie Middle School. Given a fully equipped classroom, Ben provided instruction to students labeled with learning disabilities in math, reading and language arts for one year. After that year, the school district decided to move towards a more inclusive model of education for its students with disabilities and discontinued the utilization of resource rooms. Ben found himself in a new role, with a new title, and an empty classroom.

Now with the title of "inclusion specialist", Ben's job description specifies that his main responsibilities are to provide modified and adapted instruction to "included students" in general education classrooms, monitor their progress on IEP goals, and model for general educators appropriate teaching methods for students with disabilities. Encouraged by the school principal and with the cooperation of several teachers, Ben moved his instruction out of the resource room and into some general education classrooms.

Ben and his students found the transition to these new classrooms difficult. With little joint planning time, Ben and the general educators determined that the needs of his students could best be met by having them work in small homogeneous groups. As chairperson on all the "included" students IEPs he was the most familiar with their goals and academic needs. Thus, using his skill at teaching small groups of students with disabilities and the material he had always used, he worked to provide separate instruction for the "included" students.

Very quickly, both Ben and the general education teachers agreed that the practice of separating students into two groups and trying to teach them simultaneously was not working. Both groups of students, often distracted by each other, and both teachers, frequently interrupted by the other's teaching, were not covering the material they saw as important. To remedy this problem, Ben began a "pull-out" system, which he still uses, whereby he takes his students for designated periods of the day, back to his classroom for instruction.

Joni's History-- "Teacher Without a Classroom"

Before becoming an inclusion specialist, Joni worked as an educational assistant in a resource room for students with mild learning disabilities. After receiving a Severely Handicapped Learner Endorsement, she began teaching in a self-contained classroom for students with severe cognitive and physical disabilities who were bussed in from the surrounding area. Most of her time, as well as the time

of her students, was spent in one classroom at the far end of Alder Elementary School. Her class size was small and she had two full-time assistants who did much of the actual instruction, leaving her able to manage the paperwork that came with each student. Additionally, she was responsible for coordinating and scheduling the activities of the educational assistants in her classroom. Realizing that her curriculum alone could not adequately address the learning and social needs of all her students, she worked with her principal to move her students into general education classes for parts of the day. Some of her students started attending physical education, art, and music classes with their non-disabled peers.

Joni became concerned about the stigmatization that followed her students into general education classrooms. Often accompanied by assistants, her students failed to make friends with other children outside of their self-contained room and appeared to be gaining little ground towards meeting the expectations of their general education teachers. The teachers in these general education classes counted on the assistants and Joni to provide most of the instruction for these "integrated" students. Joni, dissatisfied with this arrangement, was excited when her district decided to return students with severe disabilities to their neighborhood schools and include them more fully in general education classrooms.

To accommodate this change and to coordinate the activities and curriculum of "included" students, Joni's district opted to utilize the position of "inclusion teacher". She appeared perfect for this job with her experience as a special education teacher and her interest in providing students with disabilities more membership and learning opportunities in school. Also important was her knowledge about writing IEP goals and her ability to modify and adapt curriculum. All of these qualifications made Joni a strong candidate for the position of inclusion specialist. Now, as the specialist, Joni is required to work in other teachers' classrooms using many of the same techniques and methods she utilized in her own classroom. Her responsibilities for the coordination and scheduling of educational assistants, now called "inclusion tutors", expanded to all assistants at Alder Elementary School. Additionally, she continues to work on establishing collaborative relationships with teachers who are unfamiliar with

students with disabilities and unsure about the effect their inclusion will have on general education classrooms.

Getting to Know Sonia-- "Teacher of Teachers"

After Sonia received her Handicapped Learner Endorsement and Master's degree in special education, she worked for three years as a roaming special education teacher in a district practicing inclusion. Her duties included writing IEPs, providing individual and small group instruction, adapting curriculum, assessing the needs of students with disabilities and creating supportive networks for students. She left after two years to take a job as an inclusion specialist for the educational service district in her county.

Currently, Sonia provides consultation and support to two districts in Port Haven. Her qualifications, her experience with inclusion and with students with disabilities, and her work to create supportive networks, such as Circle of Friends, led district officials to hire her for this position. She now collaborates with two other specialists in her office to provide inservice, consultation and support to teachers, students and educational assistants in her assigned schools. She is responsible for coordinating special education teams and guiding them through the process of creating behavioral and academic plans for students with disabilities. Sonia's skill at crisis management is recognized by many school personnel and she is sometimes asked to provide consultation to a broader spectrum of students who might be experiencing problems in their classrooms. While she is not always satisfied with the outcomes of her interventions, she prefers to spend most of her time working with adults rather than providing direct service to students.

Job Descriptions & Qualifications for Inclusion Specialists

The job qualifications and descriptions in these composites are similar to the ones I received from actual specialists working in schools. Many of the descriptions talked about the need for the inclusion facilitators to collaborate with other educators, to be knowledgeable in curriculum adaptation and modification, and to be familiar with the IEP process and the development of these educational plans. Additionally, many of the job descriptions specified the role of the inclusion specialist as a supervisor and trainer of other educators. Important was their ability to develop and provide in-service around issues related to students with disabilities. Tables 2 & 3 depict the information that Cameron and I collected about inclusion specialists' job descriptions and qualifications (see Tables 2 & 3).

Out of the seven job descriptions I collected from the inclusion specialists, two of these descriptions were outdated and in the process of revision and the remaining five were current. Three of the inclusion specialists I interviewed stated that they had no job description and didn't anticipate having one in the near future. One individual, using the information she gathered from other inclusion specialists, was in the process of creating her own job description that would mesh the features of her current duties with the duties of other professionals in the field. Often, the inclusion specialists I talked to said that their job descriptions did not reflect their actual responsibilities, but rather they described what they should be doing if they had the time and resources. As their skills and presence become known to more teachers, they were called upon to work with increasing numbers of students, lessening the amount of support they could give individual teachers or children.

Table 2 Continued
Job Description Information about the
Roles and Responsibilities of Inclusion Specialists

†Most recent participants.

	Observation & Support	**Curriculum**	**IEPs**	**Staffing**	**Training (others)**	**Other**
Anita (draft & old)	Organize data base, evaluate students. Record reports	Use task analyzed curric	Develop appropriate IEP for students	Supervise SPED staff	Train teachers and EAs	Coordinate the transitions and early intervention programs

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Table 2 Continued
Job Description Information about the
Roles and Responsibilities of Inclusion Specialists

†Most recent participants.

	Observation & Support	Curriculum	IEPs	Staffing	Training (others)	Other
Betty (FTE sch.)	Visit, observe, and support gen. education teachers	Assist with curricular adaptations	Assist w/ IEP planning and implementation	Provide leadership to Supp. Ed. Team	Facilitate inservice requests	Research grant and presentation opportune. Facilitate COF*, MAPS**
Cecilia (old)	Not described	Provide individualized learning programs	Write, meet, & implement IEPs for all students	Supervise all SPED support staff, coordnt, support services	Train E.A.s	
Deborah (draft)	Serve as resource to teachers	Assist teachers in dev. curriculum	Assist in developing and monitoring IEPS Annually review	Assist staff in implement of IEP goals	Lead training sessions for teachers parents, volunteers etc.	
Elizabeth (outline)	Observe and evaluate students	Work w/teachers to adapt/support curriculum	Facilitate IEP meetings	Supervise all SPED support staff	Provide mini-inservices for h.s. staff	"Trouble-shoot" Paperwork Facilitate COF*, MAPS**
Franklin (draft)	Provide release time for teachers	Assist classroom teachers in adapting curriculum	Facilitate IEP meetings	Not described	Coord. and provide training to staff	Facilitate the transition of students to their neighborhood schools
Heather (new)	Observe programs and provide feedback to staff	Conduct informal obs. of instructional. delivery	Monitor, develop review, implementation. of IEPs	Not described	Develop. and coordinate staff develop. activities	
Isabelle (new)	Visit, observe, and support general education teachers	Assist with curricular adaptations	Assist w/ IEP planning and implementation	Help train and support supported ed. teams	Training consultation, workshops, team builder	Facilitate COF* MAPS**
†Crystal	Visit, observe, support gen. ed. teachers.	Assist with curricular adaptations	Assist with IEP planning and implementation	Assist staff with adaptations and IEP goals	Facilitate inservice requests	Facilitate COF * MAPS**
†Daria	Attend IEP meetings, support to gen. ed. teachers, assistants	Assist with curricular adaptations	Assist w/ IEP planning and implementation, monitoring IEPs	Manage and Coordinate Transdisciplinary team	Train , problem solve with team members, Plan and provide inservice	Develop peer support networks
†Ellie	Collaborate with classroom teachers, assistants	Assists with curricular adaptations	Monitors implementation in compliance with the law	Coordinates and supervises SPED teams,. Input on hiring of SPED staff	Conducts and develop inservice trainings	Responsible for location and identification of out-of-school children with disabilities
†Giselle	Observe, co-teach, model with gen. ed. teachers	Assists with modification and adaptation	Assist with meeting IEP goals	Collaborates with gen. ed. staffs	Models, provides inservice about curriculum development and modification	

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Table 2 Continued
Job Description Information about the
Roles and Responsibilities of Inclusion Specialists

†Most recent participants.

	Observation & Support	**Curriculum**	**IEPs**	**Staffing**	**Training** (others)	**Other**
†Jeannie	Assists with intervention strategies, models and assists gen. ed. teachers	Provides consultation on curriculum modifications	Monitors progress on IEP goals for LD students	Provides consultation for setting up Teacher Assistance teams	Plans and implements inservice trainings	Assists in providing needed transitioning for students
†Kristen	Collaborate with building staff, develop and model appropriate practice	Assists inclusion tutors with planning and development	Coordinate and write IEPs for designated students	Supervises tutors	Conducts inservice sessions to faculty and staff	Assist in developing and maintaining a model of inclusion, system-wide
†Leo	Consults with special and general ed. teachers and other staff	Design and implement appropriate curricular material	Assists in development of and provides maintenance in compliance with laws.	Assist building-based student teams to identify strategies prior or referral into SPED	Organizes inservice trainings	Assists in transition planning, family support through coordination of services

***Circle of Friends **McGill Action Planning System**

One of the specialists expressed her concern about not having a job description at all. Hillary, an inclusion specialist for six months, often felt under-utilized and unsure of her responsibilities:

> For awhile, I was even telling the special ed. teachers to give me something to do. I am supposed to be here today and I have nothing to do. She would let me do some testing or go do some observations for her (p. 17).

Unsure of her duties, she spent much of her time trying to introduce herself to school personnel and build rapport. When I spoke with Hillary, she was trying to create her own job description, so that her duties and responsibilities would be more clearly defined for herself as well as for the teachers who worked with her.

Crystal described how her job description changes and how it is related to her annual evaluations:

Each employee has a job description that has performance objectives, so that when you are evaluated, then they evaluate you on each objective and say whether you did it or not. Sort of like my own little IEP....Our jobs also continue to change....For example, I don't evaluate kids anymore (p. 1).

Her caseload had grown so much that she was unable to adequately perform assessments or be as involved with students as her job description implied.

One revealing requirement shared all the job descriptions was that inclusion specialists have a background in special education. Prior to being hired for their current positions, all the inclusion specialists were trained to be, and usually had worked, as special educators. This is relevant when recalling the literature's recommendation and argument that this position evolve to facilitate the inclusion of all students. The current job descriptions that I collected supported the idea that inclusion specialists continue to focus their efforts on students with disabilities which is reminiscent of a more special education initiated inclusion model.

Table 3 Continued
Central Features of the Qualifications
to be an Inclusion Specialist

†Most recent participants

	Experience	Training	Education	Certification
Anita (old)	None Stated	Ability to diagnose educat. problems and prepare remediation plans	None Stated	Valid teaching certificate w/ either SHL or HLE
Betty (new)	3 yrs. classroom experience w/ disabilities or inclusion	Multi level instruction, DAP*** integrated curriculum and a. adaptations MAPS**, COF*	Desired: Completion of Master's degree program	Valid Oregon teach. license w/ or w/o SPED endorse. or pers. serv. endorsement
Cecilia (old)	None Stated	Computer technology Human development current curriculum development	Completion of coursework for Oregon HLE	Certification not specified, only the coursework
Deborah (new)	3 yrs. classroom exp. w/ multi-disabled/emotionally handicapped students	Training in prescriptive ed. & teaching techniques	Desired: Master's degree in SPED	Current Oregon SHL or HLE
Heather (new)	3 yrs successful exper. teaching in ESD room	None Stated	Master's degree in SPED	A valid Oregon SHL or HLE
†Crystal	3 yrs. classroom experience w/ disabilities or inclusion	Multi level instruction, DAP integrated curriculum adaptations, MAPS**, COF*	Desired: Completion of Master's degree program	Valid teach. license w or w/o SPED endorse. or. severe. endorsement

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Table 3 Continued
Central Features of the Qualifications to be an Inclusion Specialist

†Most recent participants

	Experience	Training	Education	Certification
†Ellie	Experience as building administrator, and/or special education administrator	None Stated	Master's Degree	State teaching license
†Kristen	None Stated	Knowledge in early childhood development and models of integration preferred	None Stated	Certification in Severe Special Needs

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The Roles of Inclusion Specialists

As I interviewed and observed inclusion specialists, I realized that they frequently wore many different hats in trying to effectively perform the various duties outlined in their job descriptions. Their roles varied across settings, times and individuals. Sometimes they wore the hat of teacher and advocate, and at other times they were supervisors, assessors, consultants and secretaries. Table 4 depicts what Cameron and I learned about the roles of inclusion specialists (see Table 4). Leo, an inclusion specialist, explains:

> You are constantly trying to define your role--trying to define what that role is in every single situation. Every time you go to a meeting you have to define your role...I'm a trouble shooter, mediator, negotiator, problem solver and consultant (p. 4-5).

Filling these roles required inclusion specialists to draw upon a multitude of skills including an ability to switch hats quickly and efficiently. Cameron used the metaphor of a juggler to illustrate the flexibility needed and the difficulty some inclusion specialists encountered when trying to manage all of these roles and tasks efficiently:

Attempting to fill the different roles is similar to a juggling act. The specialist must juggle a variety of roles and tasks, each one similar to a ball or a flamed torch being tossed from hand to hand, floating through the air (p. 30).

Inclusion specialists had to be adept at determining which roles they would fill at any given time and which roles and tasks they would drop in order to be as effective and efficient as possible.

In whatever role they assumed, the inclusion specialists I spoke with and observed remained true to their job descriptions. Their work was consistently focused on either supporting general educators around the problems they associated with having students with disabilities in their classrooms or on providing the bulk of academic adaptation and material for these students.

Table 4 Continued
Interview and Observation Findings about the Roles and Responsibilities of Inclusion Specialists

†Most recent participants

	IEPs	Supervisor	# of sites	Support to E.A.s	Provides inservice	Consult w/ Teachers or inclusion specialist	Data Collection	Facilitate teams
Anita	Write all IEPs	Principals & SPED Dir.	1 district, 5 schools all elementary	Train, schedule	Helps plan, & recruit	Informal touch base	Formal & frequent Admin. tests	Informal supports COF*, MAPS**
Betty	Support in develop. of IEPs (MAPS**)	SPED Dir. of ESD	2 districts ? schools all levels	Support & collaborate	Plans, recruits & facilitates	Frequent consultative support	Help set up systems	Supported Ed. Teams & MAPS**, COF*
Cecilia	Write all IEPs (MAPS**)	Principals & SPED Dir.	1 district ,2 schools , 2 elementary	Train, schedule & supervise	Plans & recruits	Rarely	Formal & frequent	MAPS**, COF*
Deborah	Write part or or all of IEPs	SPED Dir.	1 district 7 schools 4 elementary, 2 middle., 1 high school	Train	Plans & recruits	Informally touch base	Help set up systems	Informal supports
Elizabeth	Write all IEPs	Principal & SPED Dir.	1 district 1 high school	Train, support, supervise & schedule	Plans & recruits	Rarely	Sets up some systems	Informal supports
Franklin (Juanita)	Support in develop. of IEPs	SPED Dir.	1 district ? schools all levels	Support & collaborate	Plans, recruits & facilitates	Frequent consultative support	Not a lot	Facilitates Supp. Ed. Teams
Georgene	Write all IEPs	Principal & SPED Dir.	1 district 1 high school	Train	None Specified	None Specified	Formal	Informal supports
Heather (Kelly)	Support or write IEPs	SPED Dir.	1 county ? schools	Supervise	Plans & recruits	Frequent consultative support	Sets up system	Facilitates Supp. Ed. Teams
Isabelle	Support in develop. of IEPs	ESD SPED Dir.	3 districts ? schools all levels	Support & collaborate	Plans, recruits & facilitates	Frequent consultative support	Helps set up system	Facilitates Supp. Ed. Teams

Table 4 Continued
Interview and Observation Findings about the Roles and Responsibilities of Inclusion Specialists

†Most recent participants

	IEPs	Supervisor	# of sites	Support to E.A.s	Provides Inservice	Consult w/ Teachers or inclusion specialist	Data Collection	Facilitate teams
†Crystal	Support in develop. of IEPs (MAPS**)	ESD SPED Dir.	1 district 6 schools all levels	Support & collaborate	Plans, recruits & facilitates	Frequent consultative support	Helps set up systems	Supported Ed. Teams & MAPS**, COI*
†Daria	Coordinates Develops IEPs (MAPS**)	SPED Director	1 district ? schools ? level	Support & collaborate	None specified	Frequent consultative support	Formal	Coordinator & Facilitator of SPED teams
†Ellie	Assists in developing and implements IEPs	Superinten-dent of Schools	1 district ? schools all levels	Supervisor and trainer	Plans, recruits & facilitates	Frequent collaborate , and consult. support	Formal	Coordinator and Supervisor
†Felipe	Consult. and attend meetings for IEPs Oversee implementati on of	Principal & SPED Director	1 district 1 school elementary	Support and collaborate	none specified	Collaborate , and consultative support	Helps set up system.	Informal & formal supports
†Giselle	Some consultation and referral	SPED Director	1 district 5 schools secondary	Support & Collaborate	Plans, recruits & facilitates	Frequent consultative support	Formal	Informal Supports Attend team meetings
†Hillary	Some consultation and referral	SPED Director	1 district 1 school elementary	Support & Collaborate	Plans, recruits & facilitates	Consult, support	Formal	Informal & Formal Supports Attends team meetings
†Irene	Writes IEPs and oversees implementati on of	SPED Director	1 district 3 schools elementary	Train, supervise, support & schedule	Plans & Facilitates	Some consult, support & collaboratio tion	Formal & frequent	Attends Team Meetings
†Jeannie	Support in developing, of	Special Services Coordinator	1 county 17 schools all levels	Train, support & collaborate	Plans, recruits, & facilitates	Frequent consultative support	Informal and frequent	Facilitates supported ed. teams.
†Kristen	Chairpers. on all IEPs	ESD Special ed. Director	1 district 3 schools 14 elem. students	Supervise, train & support.		Frequent consultative supports	Formal & frequent	Facilitates supported ed. teams
†Leo	Monitors and assists in developmen t of	SPED Director	2 districts 9 schools all levels	Support & Collaborate	None Specified	Consultant and collaborativ support	Formal	Collaborates with supported ed. team.
†Martha	Provides input, carries out implement. of with assistant	School Principal	1 first & second grade split classroom, 27 students	Directs &coordinates in class aide time	Attends inservice when provided	Consultativ e & collab. meetings Drop-in or by appt.	Monitors academic progress of students, gradebook	Meets with aide, specialist to plan and develop curriculum
†Nancy	Some input and implement.	School principal	Third grade classroom, 18 students	Requests, directs, instructs assistants in classroom	None Specified	Receives frequent support, specialist does pull-out	Grades	Attends supp. ed. meeting, provides input

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Table 4 Continued
Interview and Observation Findings about the Roles and Responsibilities of Inclusion Specialists

†Most recent participants

	IEPs	Supervisor	# of sites	Support to E.A.s	Provides inservice	Consult w/ Teachers or inclusion specialist	Data Collection	Facilitate teams
†Olivia	Some input	School principal	Fifth grade classroom, 29 students	Input and direction on their work	None Specified	Frequent consultative support given	Monitors progress through grades and notes home to parents	Meets with assistants, parents, ed. consultant
†Penny	Some input	School Principal	First and second grade split, 24 students	Input and direction to assistants in classroom	Attends inservice when provided	Minimal consult with specialist	Monitors progress through grades	Meets with assistants and other gen. ed. teachers
†Renee	Some input	School Principal	First and second grade split, 22 students	Input and direction to assistants in classroom	Attends inservice when provided	Co-teaches with specialist	Monitors progress through grades/ specialist does testing	Meets with assistants and other gen. ed. teachers, and specialist
†Sally	Helps design and implement	School Principal	First, second third grade classroom, 24 students	Input and direction assistants in classroom, meetings	None specified	Receives frequent I support for sup. ed. consultant, phone , appts.	Monitors progress through grades	Meets with multi-disciplinary team and supp. ed. consultant
†Tasha	Sits in on IEP meetings	School Principal	Second Grade Classroom, 25 students	Input and direction to assistants in her classroom	None specified	Gets consultative support from educational specialist	Monitors progress through grades and IEP process	Meets with IEP team, resource room teacher and ed. specialist

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Establishing Relationships & Deciding Which Role to Assume

In fulfilling all of these roles, many inclusion specialists placed great importance on their ability to intertwine their expectations with the expectations of others. This entailed establishing positive working relationships with teachers, educational assistants and administrators. By clarifying and establishing the goals that each person in the school saw as necessary for inclusion, specialists wearing their various hats, tried to individualize their consultation, collaboration or assistance according to colleagues' expressed needs. Crystal explains the importance of defining her role in conjunction with the goals of those she works with:

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> We don't all have the same goals. Sometimes people think I have all the answers and that I should just tell them how to do it [inclusion]. I don't have all the answers. There isn't a recipe book. I have just as many questions as they do (p. 9).

This supports the idea that at times inclusion specialists are relied upon as the "experts" around the inclusion of students with disabilities. As the "experts" their specialness often inadvertently inhibits the membership of *their* students by consistently "rescuing" general educators. As behavior or academic problems arise for students with disabilities, as they do for all students, inclusion specialists frequently step in and provide short-term solutions. Leo explains:

> Teachers never have to get trained. They have somebody like me around to help them out with this "special" stuff. And they say, "Oh, I don't have to learn it, because Leo does. I don't have to work with these parents, because Leo will take this and put out the fire" (p. 6).

By constantly stepping in to be the problem-solvers in any issue associated with students with disabilities, the "ownership" of these students remains tied to the inclusion specialist.

Some inclusion specialists see this as resistance on the part of general educators to include students with disabilities into their classrooms, and they try to arm themselves with information to counter this. Jeannie said that she tries to learn as much about a school as possible before determining what her role will be in that school. After she gets an idea about what the school's climate and needs are, she decides which goals to pursue and when best to propose changes. She explains:

> There is turf and there are political issues in every school....So it is really important that the consultant delivering services knows really quickly up-front in September as much as you can about what is going on in that school. If there is major sweeping change going on, you may not be welcome as an instigator of change. You sort of have to have an antenna and feel out how much you can pursue and how many goals you can really work on(p. 3).

The perceived resistance by some general educators to include students with disabilities often dictates which role the inclusion specialist assumes. She might feel the need to take on the role of advocate in a classroom where she senses a lot of negative feelings about inclusion. She may take on the role of an assessor or observer so as to not step on the toes of an already uncomfortable general educator. A number of inclusion specialists spoke about this need to tread carefully around some educators and administrators in order not to further alienate them from the concept of inclusion or students with disabilities. They cited teachers' attitudes as a major obstacle in the way of successfully including students with disabilities in general education classrooms.

As I picture an inclusion specialist, I envision her standing and looking into a mirror. Reflected in the mirror, standing behind her, are the teachers, students, and administrators she works with. As they talk to her, she quickly takes off one hat and puts on another. Sometimes the reflection becomes blurry and the specialist must reach out and adjust the mirror so that everyone's reflection is clear and she can re-focus her efforts towards meeting their expectations while at the same time pursuing her own agenda.

Roles & Activities-Composite Sketches

To illustrate how inclusion specialists in the "teacher with an empty classroom" role, "teacher without a classroom" role and "teacher of teachers" role carry out their responsibilities and activities, I created composite sketches outlining what an interview or part of a day with Joni, Ben and Sonia might

look like. In these sketches, I used the actual words of the various inclusion specialistsI interviwed to better reflect how they defined their activities, roles, responsibilities and the difficulties they experience in trying to effectively execute their jobs. These quotes within the composites are printed in italics.

"Teacher With an Empty Classroom" Composite--Talking with Ben

Walking into Ben's classroom feels familiar. The walls are covered with decorations, shelves filled with books, and desks placed in small groups near the blackboard. I am struck by how neat and orderly everything appears. As I look more closely at the shelves I see that they are stacked with teacher's manuals and curriculum material. The classroom feels large and spacious. Ben's desk is in the far right corner near the back of the room and semi-enclosed with room dividers. It looks like a small office within a classroom.

Ben begins by describing his job at the middle school where he has just recently been hired.

> *I have some groups in which I teach kids reading and math directly and I handle a large bulk of the paperwork for that position. I attend the meetings for the children that I serve, and I also provide consultation throughout the building, for behavioral and academic concerns....I have periods where I can go observe and provide support, give the teacher a break for instance.*

When I talked to Ben, he had been working at the school for three months and his position was new.

> *I'm new to the building so I'm trying to develop rapport with the teachers. A lot of times they are not comfortable with coming to someone they don't know.*

As we continued to talk I tried to get a picture of what Ben's role in the school was. From his description it was clear that he had different roles throughout the day. Some students would probably

describe him as their reading or math teacher, while teachers would call him the specialist or special education teacher. Others, however, including Ben, would have a very different description.

> *In our school the classroom teacher is the case manager. They are the ones who know supposedly what the kid needs and where they are going. I am just a resource. I am a help. But under the law, someone needs to be there watching what's happening. I am simply the district watchdog. I can't leave it, because sometimes if you leave it up to people who don't know the law, who aren't qualified to know, then we have problems. And so if I see problems, or hear about problems I step in to problem solve....They are still my kids.*

At the same time, Ben expressed his wish to participate more in classrooms with general education teachers.

> *I would like to do more of what we call push-in....I would like to go into more classrooms and be with the classroom teacher. I don't want them to leave when I come in.*

Questions about Ben's Role

I question the possibility of this happening with Ben in his current role. How do teachers take ownership of students when the specialist still perceives them as his students? How can rapport be built and maintained when one person plays the "watchdog"? If Ben's concern is only with specific students, how can he be included in the classroom as a teacher?

"Teacher Without a Classroom" Composite--A Morning With Joni

I make my way to the front office to check-in as a visitor for the day at the elementary school where I am supposed to meet Joni. I can smell the beginnings of the cafeteria school lunch that the students will be having in a few hours.

I am directed to Joni's office, a small room with one window, filled with huge rolls of butcher paper and smaller stacks of construction paper, two small student desks and a large desk where she is sitting. There is a constant low hum of some sort of furnace or generator in the room. I find her talking on the phone with a note of frustration and tension in her voice. She begins shuffling through the numerous files that are spread across her workspace, presumably looking for a phone number.

Joni has already started juggling. It's close to 8:00 am on a school day and one of her educational assistants has called in sick. As the roaming special education teacher and teacher of inclusion, she is responsible for the scheduling of the EAs. Her day begins on the phone with the anticipation of small fires popping up all over that she will ultimately be responsible for catching and putting out.

> *Actually it is a problem, that coverage is so tough,...I find myself going to a school for fifteen minutes just to give the inclusion tutor a break....Coverage is a problem. It seems like I am always looking for somebody to cover for something.*

As we begin quite rapidly walking out of the office and down the hall Joni very briefly tells me her immediate plans:

> *Right now I am going into the resource room and introduce you to those people and get over to see John and then I'll get his paperwork and then we'll go.*

I decided tentatively to leave my backpack with my tape recorder in Joni's office. I am nervous about not having my stuff. Are we staying in this school for awhile? Will I need my keys, coat or tape recorder? Joni is carrying a file under her arm, a day planner, a pen lodged behind her ear and another in her hand being twitched back and forth quickly between finger and thumb.

John is six years old. His squeals can be heard as we approach the resource room. A couple of doors in the hallway close softly in response to the noise. Joni walks in and goes directly to John past the two adults in the room. The room equipped with student desks, blackboards and a small library of teacher manuals and children's books. John is the only child in the room. He wears large thick lensed glasses held snugly to his head with a bright neon blue elastic band. At first I can only see the top of his head over the standing dividers that surround him in the corner of the room. His squeals grow a little louder and consistent as Joni speaks to him in a warm familiar way. A picture board sits on a shelf within reach of John. As he begins to pull puzzles and other toys off the shelves, she gently moves John toward the picture board and directs him to point to the puzzle card. He struggles to get back to the puzzles, but Joni is persistent and physically moves his hand to the card. Play begins almost immediately with Joni speaking in low soothing tones to John about what a good job he is doing. She is smiling and her clipboard and pens have been placed on a nearby table. She is a teacher at work with her student.

After 10 minutes Joni directs her attention to the educational assistant who has been observing her time with John from outside the dividers.

How is Johnny doing today? Anything I need to know about?

Her question is met with a brief uncomfortable silence. A look is exchanged between the EA and resource room teacher. Information about how well John is doing and whether or not he is using the picture board that Joni has designed ensues. The EA explains that the picture board is time consuming

and it is difficult to use consistently because John spends part of his day in the general education kindergarten classroom where there is no picture board. Joni stresses the importance of the board and begins once again modeling how to use it with John. At that moment he chooses to demonstrate that he is very aware of how to use the board when he needs to go to the bathroom. This eases the tension somewhat between Joni and the other educators. The use of the picture board appears to let Joni know that John is receiving the services that she feels are necessary. The EA and resource room teacher appear relieved that they have been able to show her that they have done some work with the tool that Joni designed.

Joni decides to take John outside for some playtime. As we make our way outside, I watch John's movement. He has only just recently learned to walk so we weave across the hallway moving forward somewhat haphazardly and with plenty of squealing and a fair amount of screaming. Joni makes no effort to quiet him and we find our way outside for a few minutes of play. The other children will not have recess for at least another hour. I am concerned and ask Joni how often he plays with other children on the playground. She looks pained and says, *"Rarely."*

John soon leads us back into the building towards the library. Joni follows him inside the library doors reminding John that this is a quiet space. John screams and Joni immediately picks him up and carries him out into the hallway and back to the resource room. I wondered if John had ever been in the library before and whether he will ever be allowed to look at the books in there. How will John learn how to behave in different parts of the school if he isn't allowed to spend time outside his cubicle in the resource room?

When we arrive back in the resource room the EA assigned to John is not there and the resource room teacher makes no move to assume responsibility for him. We move to *his* kindergarten classroom where we find an empty room. Joni remembers that this is music time and that his classmates must be in the singing room. John has made his way to a long table where painted pieces of paper lie about in

various stages of drying. We stay for a few minutes in the room and watch as John explores the paintings, sometimes throwing them on the floor and other times just picking them up, glancing at them and then placing them back on the table. I ask Joni about how much time John spends in his assigned kindergarten class. She guesses that he is up to about an hour and a half a day. He goes to music with the students, and snacks with them and sometimes attends story time. She explains that he can only spend 10 to 15 minute stretches in the kindergarten because he is so disruptive in the classroom. Whether he makes it into the classroom has everything to do with whether or not the EA can coordinate his time in the resource room with the schedule of the kindergarten. John's inclusion is dictated by the various adults responsible for his care. Joni's schedule, the EA's schedule and the schedule of the kindergarten teacher all have an impact on what John does daily. The teachers don't always know when Joni will arrive and it requires them to switch gears unexpectedly. How does John cope with the changing schedules? How does the inconsistency affect his learning and inclusion into the kindergarten? Who is ultimately responsible for his education?

Joni describes her job:

> *I directly oversee the educational process of seven students with severe disabilities at the elementary level and I consult on another seven cases. My job is to help students access services.*

She describes herself as:

> *[I am] not a direct service person but I am in the classroom almost everyday. I see almost every child everyday....If the tutor is having a specific problem around something I may take the child and work with the child myself to get a sense of what the issue is or I also will do some modeling for the teachers....I am the chairperson of this child's IEP. So it gives me some nice hands-on time to work with the child.*

Questions about Joni's Role

The teachers that she speaks of are general education teachers and the inclusion tutors and educational assistants, who are sometimes certified special education teachers. Her title of Inclusion Teacher is curious. What does Joni teach? Is she teaching the concept of inclusion to other educators or is she responsible for teaching the "inclusion students"? How long does it take to teach other educators about inclusion and do they at some point begin teaching each other? How much "hands on time" does Joni really have with her students and is it enough to allow her to appropriately determine their academic and social needs?

Summary

Ben and Joni carry out their jobs in different ways, but the similarities are clear. Each carries the ultimate responsibility for the education of certain students labeled with disabilities. The inclusion they work for eludes them and their students. Joni finds herself supervising certified special education teachers who themselves have been misplaced and are now given the title of inclusion tutors. Ben finds himself overseeing the curriculum of students that he does not work with directly or works with in pull-out for specified subjects. Both appear to focus on the educational needs of only certain students relying on their background as special education teachers to guide them in modifying lessons just for those students. How can the students that specialists like Joni and Ben advocate for and work with be fully included in their general education classrooms when the adults educating them don't collaborate and work together to design meaningful lessons for them and their classmates? How do teachers without classrooms successfully oversee IEP goals when they are not privy to the implementation and designing of curriculum or have adequate time to assess their students' academic needs?

"Teacher of Teachers Composite"--An Afternoon with Sonia

The building sits behind what used to be a school house. It is now filled with the offices of administrators, consultants and secretaries. I am going to the four story modern building in back that is connected to the old building by a breezeway. The secretary at the front desk directs me to a long hallway lined with large cubicles where people are typing, talking on phones and shuffling through paperwork. Sonia is at the far end of the hallway at her desk talking on the phone with her day-planner open. Her pen is poised and she repeats twice to the teacher on the phone that she thinks that they need to schedule an appointment. She turns to me and raises one finger signaling that it will be a minute before she can talk to me. As she does so she smiles and rolls her eyes in exasperation. The phone call is about a student whose behavior has become a problem. She cups her hand over the mouthpiece of the phone and whispers:

> *The biggest issue is behavior, it's not anything else. It is the very biggest issue with teachers that I deal with...*

After an appointment is made for the following week, Sonia hangs up and introduces me to the other two consultants and one educational assistant working with her. While they themselves are a sort of team, each is assigned different schools to work with, so little of their actual work overlaps. Sonia works with a couple of districts and her co-workers are assigned others.

It is close to 11 o'clock when we leave the building and decide that we should take one car to the middle school where Sonia has her first appointment for the day. The parking lot is full and she is navigating us through the maze of cars with a bag slung over shoulder and car keys jingling. As she slides the side door open of her small mini-van, a number of files that are stacked on the floor shift and start to fall on the concrete. She shoves them back in and begins to sort through them until she finds the

one she wants. She tells me with a smile and an air of resignation that she is on the road so much that she keeps most of her files in her car.

I have too many schools. Seventeen schools scattered around the county is a bit much.

As she drives, Sonia describes the different parts of her job.

We do a lot of in-service training, a lot of staff development. We work with educational assistants sometimes. I get calls from teachers and I'm used as a behavioral consultant....I'm called in for a crisis, usually when the bag of tricks is empty.

She explains that she is most often called in for students with IEPs, but does address entire classrooms.

I work with whole classrooms doing Circle of Friends. I used to think that I could go in and say this is how you do Circle of Friends, but it's not gonna work....It's not helpful.

As we pull into the middle school parking lot, I glance at my watch and realize that it has taken us close to twenty minutes to get here. We check in at the office and get our visitor passes. Today Sonia is meeting with two special educators, three teacher assistants and a case manager. The meeting has been called to discuss the behavior of Sadie, a seventh grader with some behavioral issues that have re-surfaced since the beginning of the year. Sonia took part in the initial implementation of a behavior plan for Sadie some months earlier. The case manager greets us expressing her relief to Sonia,

I'm so glad you're here. We're going nuts and I don't think we could hold on one more week the way things are going. We're in trouble.

The meeting is scheduled to be brief. The two educational assistants, case manager, and resource room teacher are meeting over their lunch break. The meeting begins with Sonia going over the behavior plan developed for Sadie. She talks about a safe-space and a behavior chart, referring to her notes from the previous meeting. An animated discussion begins with everyone describing how they have used the chart and safe space in a variety of ways in order to try and get Sadie to behave appropriately. For about 10 minutes Sonia listens, asking questions intermittently to clarify what someone has done or said and then addresses the entire group with restrained impatience. I'm not sure if the group registers her frustration even as she tells them:

> *I hate to say I told you so, but you guys have a crisis that just didn't have to happen. You needed to have regular team meetings about Sadie and it sounds like you haven't met since I was here more than a month ago.*

As if on cue, Sadie rushes into the room with an educational assistant on her heels. Her long blonde hair is pulled back into a single ponytail emphasizing her face, which at that moment is flushed. Her expression shows her surprise and confusion at seeing all her teachers gathered in the room she knows as her safe-space. I think for a moment that she is going to cry, but she is silent as she surveys the room. Could this meeting be about her? The assistant quickly leads her out of the room while quietly explaining that she needs to go someplace else for safe space today.

The meeting continues after a few comments about how Sadie often runs away from the assistants assigned to her and comes to the safe-space. Sonia tells the group that the sharing of information is crucial to the consistency that Sadie needs in order to understand what is expected of her and suggests that all of them talk about what they have observed to be problem times for her. Two or three team members nod in agreement and a meeting is scheduled for the following week with all the team members promising to keep detailed notes about Sadie's behavior, the context, and their response

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to the behavior. Sonia promises to return early next week to observe Sadie and provide them with her thoughts about the next steps. The meeting ends quickly with the team members hurrying to their classrooms.

Sonia and I leave for a short lunch. As we drive, Sonia talks about the meeting we just left.

I just can't believe this team. They don't need me to do this stuff. I shouldn't have to come out here when things fall apart. They wouldn't have fallen apart if they had just kept meeting and talking to each other. I swear, I feel sometimes like I'm case-managing adults!

Sonia talks about her role and her wish to have a positive impact on educators.

One of the things I try to do is to empower building teams to work together. I see myself as the least important person on the whole team.

She expresses concern about the lack of time she spends with students.

The problem is that in most instances, I don't know the students or the situations and often my ideas are the quick fix. Yes, I do fix it quickly and then it falls apart in 2 weeks.

She is obviously frustrated by this and yet she sees her job as important in other ways.

Teachers are alone, so it is nice to have an educational specialist come in and talk to them. So I will sit with them and I will get them to talk and I will listen real well. You have to be a good listener and be able to draw that out of people and then help guide them.

We continued meeting with teachers and educational assistants about a variety of issues and students throughout the day. I am struck by Sonia's role as an advocate for many of the students she

works to include in general education classrooms. When frustration is high, it is her voice that reminds teachers and assistants that the student needs support.

> *This is the time when we need to dig in and enlist the support of teachers. This child needs us now.*

Summary

I sense that Sonia is frustrated frequently in her job. As a consultant to adults, does she feel removed from the students that she is responsible for including? What impact does she have on these students and is it something that she herself feels good about and appreciates?

I have mixed feelings about her role as an advocate. Is the inclusion specialist sometimes the only one invested in a child's learning? What does this say about the "ownership" of this child and his/her learning? If consultants working with adults were not available, would teachers and EAs fulfill the role of advocating for a child when frustration is high and would this subsequently lead to more ownership by general educators?

Activities of Actual Inclusion Specialists

To execute their various roles, inclusion specialists performed numerous tasks and activities. I was able to observe five inclusion specialists throughout their workday and note in chronological order their various activities. Table 5 delineates the breakdown of activities for Crystal, Daria, Hillary, Jeannie, and Leo and the activities of inclusion specialists Cameron observed in her study (see Table 5).

As I spoke with inclusion specialists and later as I reviewed the amount of time they spent on different activities, I was struck by the small amount of time that they actually spent with students and teachers in the classroom. On the day that I observed Crystal, she spent no time observing or teaching students but rather a lot of time on the phone or doing paperwork. Leo, Crystal and Daria spent

considerable time providing consultation to teachers. Daria described how her job used to allow for more time with students and educators:

> It was great when we could spend time in the classroom, I mean a lot of time facilitating, helping with materials, problem solving on the spot. You know, training, working with kids, working with assistants and teachers. We were really a part of the core team around kids. Well, that is gone. Way gone. (p.8).

Lack of time was mentioned by almost all of the specialists I spoke with. It was most frequently mentioned as the number one obstacle preventing them from efficiently or effectively fulfilling their responsibilities. They were often left struggling to appropriately and adequately support and plan for teachers and students. Leo explains:

> I usually only come in when there is a crisis. I just don't have time to check-in or observe everyone, so I just go in when they call me. Rarely, do I actually have time to do any long-term planning with teachers about students. I have so many students I don't really know some of them very well (p. 13).

These comments, along with my observations of inclusion specialists, leave me wondering and concerned about the impact inclusion specialists actually have on students and teachers. If the inclusion specialist does not really know his students, how can he effectively write an individual student's IEP or know what support that individual might need? This brings up again the issue of "ownership". If, as Cameron and I have found, students with disabilities are often still "owned" by someone other than the general educator, and the inclusion specialist is often absent from the day to day school life of students, who is ultimately taking responsibility for the "included" students' learning?

Table 5
Amount of Time each of the Observed Inclusion Specialists Spent on Different Activities

†Most recent participants

	Phone calls, administrivia, Business, paperwork, & meetings	Observe &/or teach in general ed. setting (pull-out)	Observe &/or teach in general ed. setting (w/peers)	Talk &/or work w/teachers & parents out of classroom	Drive	Lunch	Interview with me
Anita	27 minutes	2 hours	50 minutes	38 minutes	50 minutes	30 minutes	1 hour, 20 min.
Betty	3 hours, 50 min.	none	1 hour, 45 min.	2 hours	1 hour, 55 min.	working lunch	30 minutes
Cecilia	4 hours, 5 min.	none	5 minutes	1 hour, 40 min.	30 minutes	30 minutes	1 hour, 10 min.
†Crystal	2 hours, 30 min.	None	None	2 hours, 45 min.	40 min.	45 min.	1 hour, 5 min.
†Daria	1 hour, 30 min.	37 min.	25 min.	2 hours, 51 min.	55 min.	30 min.	45 min.
†Hillary	35 min.	15 min.	42 min.	1 hour, 30 min.	1 hour	45 min.	1 hour
†Jeannie	None	30 min.	None	3 hours, 30 min.	29 min.	work lunch	1 hour, 30 min.
†Leo	2 hours, 25 min.	20 min.	1 hour	2 hours, 21 min.	30 min.	work lunch.	1 hour .

General Educators Perceptions

I interviewed seven general educators working in schools practicing inclusion. All of the teachers I spoke with were recommended to me by the inclusion specialists that I interviewed. Continuing to use an open-ended interview style, I met with teachers in their classrooms or talked to them on the phone.

I found that teachers hold varying opinions about inclusion, students with disabilities, the role of inclusion specialists and their own role in inclusive settings. To illustrate these perceptions and thoughts, I created two composite general education teachers. Gail, represents the thoughts and feelings of teachers who are quite comfortable with including students with disabilities in their classrooms. The second composite teacher, Brenda, reflects the thoughts and feelings of teachers who are less at ease with inclusion and unsure about their role in inclusive classrooms. Using the actual words of various teachers that I interviewed (quotes in italics), I composed a composite interview session with Gail and Brenda.

Talking with Gail & Brenda-- Composite General Education Teachers

I am meeting Gail and Brenda at Poplar Bluff Elementary School. The school is known in the community for including students with disabilities in general education classrooms. It is close to 2:30

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p.m. and the school busses are sitting in the parking lot with their engines idling. As I run through the rain across the parking lot, I can hear the bell ringing signaling the end of the school day for students. The office is busy when I step up to the front desk and ask for directions to Brenda's classroom.

I make my way down the hall amongst the stares of small children. They are so aware when there is a new face in the building. Teachers pass me and smile tentatively, probably wondering if they should stop this stranger wandering their hallways. I find Brenda's classroom and wait quietly just inside the door as she finishes talking to a child about her assignments. When she is done and the child dismissed for the day, she greets me with a handshake and explains that we'll be meeting in Gail's classroom a little further down the hall. She says that she just needs a minute to get organized and then we'll be on our way. I take this opportunity to wander around the classroom.

The classroom is large and a little dark. There is one window facing the back of the building overlooking the parking lot where I see my car. I try to get a feel for the classroom and guess what grade she teaches. I know I wrote it down somewhere, but I don't want to go through my bag. The desks are arranged in a large half-circle facing the front of the room where a chalkboard sits. It appears that the students are working on writing stories about a journey they would like to take. Some of their writing assignments are posted on a side wall with photos of each author pinned next to them. Some students have written two or three pages while others have one written page. One of the pictures has a piece of paper next to it on which is printed very neatly, one sentence. I glance at the author's picture and see that he is sitting in a wheelchair. Brenda glances over and comments:

> *That one is a little boy who has to be fed through a tube twice a day and has medication. I have an assistant that takes care of him and the inclusion specialist works with him also. He is a real problem.*

I am curious to know what kind of problems he poses. I jot down to ask her about him later in the interview.

As we make our way down the hall to Gail's classroom, Brenda asks me about my background and why I decided to be a teacher. I tell her a little about myself and a little about my project explaining that I am interviewing a number of educators in her area. She wishes me luck in a tone that reminds me that teaching isn't all that easy and that maybe I will need a lot of luck. We arrive in Gail's classroom just as she has said good-bye to a parent.

Her classroom is tiny and very yellow. The walls and ceilings are covered with artwork and they appear to be the efforts of children younger than in Brenda's classroom. The desks are smaller too and they are placed in groups of four or five facing each other. The children's names are printed on strips of purple and green tag board pasted on their desks. Gail greets us warmly and begins arranging chairs so that we can face each other and I can place my tape recorder between us.

I begin the interview by asking them to tell me a little bit about themselves and then their classrooms. Gail starts by telling me that she has been teaching for almost 12 years, but for only a year at Poplar Bluff. She has 23 students right now. She goes on to tell me about her class:

> *Well, first of all, I have six and seven year olds. They are what you would typically call first graders. They are all at different levels. It is just so interesting. I am a believer in just accepting students where they are and respecting that, rather than thinking that they all have to do this, or all read this book, or write this way.*

She talks for a few minutes and brings out the work her students are doing in math and writing. She is animated and points out where certain students sit as she calls them by name and describes what they are like. Brenda then describes her class:

Right now I have 26 kids. It is down. I had 29 for quite awhile. I have 26 and all abilities. I have three students that go to the resource room for math in the morning and I have two that go in the afternoon for Language Arts.

She goes on to describe the rest of her classroom in terms of their labels. She has one "included" student and another three that she calls "Chapter Ones". I ask her then about her "included student", and wonder if he is the one whose picture I saw on the wall. She describes this student:

That is Christian. He is a very big manipulator and he can just pull the strings. He is just a little guy. The cutest guy in the whole world. Sweet and I love him to death, but he is a manipulator and he doesn't want to work. So, the inclusion specialist has given me some ideas, and they work for awhile, but not for long with Christian.

I ask her to tell me more about what the inclusion specialist does for her. She says that he usually comes in to just observe and give ideas about how to get Christian to do his work. Sometimes he works with the aide and models techniques for her to use when she is with Christian. He also is responsible for Christian's educational plan. Brenda explains:

I'm not really up on the process of the IEP. I refer them to the specialist and the resource room. I sit in on it, but I'm not really in charge. I just talk about how Christian is doing in the classroom and the adjustment and all that. How he is, and how he compares with the other kids.

I ask her what, if there is anything, she wishes she knew more about or had been trained to do in terms of having students with disabilities in her classroom. She answers:

I think that there could have been training. I mean I cannot recall any training as far as any of those kind of children. I was really, really surprised at all the problems.

Brenda then looks to Gail and explains that the two of them have very different views about inclusion and what the specialists are for. Gail takes this as her cue to tell me about how she utilizes the specialist and her own role in terms of inclusion.

It makes a difference when someone new comes to your classroom, but especially when a child with special needs comes in....The first week, I thought, "Oh, my gosh! What am I going to do? My class is falling apart." I kind of let the special ed. person take over and work with this child. So I didn't feel in control. I had to take back ownership of the child....The special ed. person is the case manager of the IEP, but it is my responsibility overall.

I ask Gail why she feels that it is important for her to have ownership. She answers:

Well, I believe that if I don't have ownership or if I'm not invested in what the goals are for her, that I'm not going to carry it out. I mean if it came kind of from a top down approach, then I'm less likely to follow through with that. But if it's like a mutual investment in this child, or a mutual decision, I am much more invested in being consistent and carrying that through.

I am interested to know what a teacher like Gail sees as the role of the inclusion specialist in her classroom.

I think the specialist does a mixture of things. She does some direct service with students. I think that is important. She doesn't tell you how to do Circle of Friends, she does it with them, so you are there as a participant. It's not like you go and have a break. You are there with your students....She gives some suggestions to you as a teacher..., but she doesn't do it so they [the students] think she is giving their teacher some hints...She comes in and observes. Since you are not able to sit back and observe, it gives you that perspective of what is going on.

Summary

I sense that Brenda does not see herself as central to Christian's education. She feels that people with more training and expertise are better equipped to meet his needs. Even though the inclusion specialist's visits are sporadic, she believes that he is really the central decision-maker and problem-solver when it comes Christian.

Gail, on the other hand, feels that it is important for her to have "ownership" of all her students. She appreciates the support that the inclusion specialist brings, but really sees this support as an added bonus rather than a necessity.

"Supports", "Owners", and "Experts"

The composites illustrate some of the differences in how teachers view inclusion, their roles as teachers in inclusive settings and the roles of inclusion specialists. I believe that the kind of support inclusion specialists give to teachers and what role they assume is related to who has "ownership" and an investment in students' learning.

Three of the teachers I spoke to, Penny, Renee, and Martha appeared to take the most responsibility for their students. They described their specialists as an added resource and as a team

member rather than the case-managers of their "included" students. They utilized the specialist in practical ways such as team teaching lessons or assisting in setting up networks of support for entire classrooms. All three stressed the importance of staying informed as teachers' about their students. Each of them at some point had to step in and insist that students not be pulled-out, but rather have the specialist come into the classroom and participate as a teacher. Still, these teachers discussions with me were centered on the inclusion of students with disabilities and they associated the inclusion specialists' work with students with disabilities almost exclusively.

Similar to the composite character Brenda, Nancy, Sally, Olivia, and Tasha saw the specialist as the "expert". The specialist was much more responsible for the academic, physical and social needs of the "included" students. These teachers also described their students in terms of their labels and disabilities. They focused on what these students could not do, and the added pressure that came with having them in the classroom. These teachers exhibited less ownership for their students and felt less trained to meet their needs. The specialist, taking care of the IEPs and coordinating the special education assistants for these students, allowed these teachers to abdicate responsibility for these students. One inclusion specialist, Leo, described this as teachers never having to learn because he was always there to "fix" the problem.

The support that inclusion specialists brought to these teachers classrooms varied. A number of teachers talked about the role of the specialists as that of an advocate for getting educational assistants and resources into their classroom. These specialists acted as liaisons between the school administration and the teachers and accessed materials and assistance that the teacher saw as important. Additionally, many teachers appreciated the specialists' ability to observe and problem solve. Often too busy to stop to address recurring problems, the teachers relied on the specialists to provide them with techniques and solutions for dealing with students with disabilities. Others emphasized the role of the inclusion

specialist as that of secretary. Unfamiliar with all the paperwork that comes with labeled, teachers relied on the specialist to plan meetings and complete this work.

It is difficult for me to know what impact the inclusion specialist has had on the attitudes and practices of teachers. What would teachers like Nancy, Sally, Olivia, and Tasha do differently if the inclusion specialist did not take the "expert" role in their classrooms? Would some specialists argue that they had no choice but to take on this "expert" role, because the teachers aren't taking responsibility for students with disabilities? Additionally, why are teachers like Martha, Penny and Renee better able to take part in the learning of their "included" students?

REFLECTIONS

Systemic inclusion is not the total abandonment of the practices, services or supports associated with special education. Rather, it is a way of accessing those things in a different way and utilizing the expertise and ideas of a broader range of educators. Merging the systems of education will open the doors to new opportunities for growth and learning for teachers and students. The information that I gathered from inclusion specialists and general educators leads me to believe that we have some distance to go before the vision of systemic inclusion is realized.

To begin with, I am concerned that the inclusion that I have been witnessing is most often limited to focusing on students with disabilities. This kind of inclusion-- special education initiated inclusion-- is the predominant influence in defining the jobs of many inclusion specialists and in shaping many students' school experiences. Inclusion, as it is currently being practiced in many places, is really the re-location of special education personnel and practice into general education classrooms. The two spheres, rather than blending, continue on a parallel track that separates students and teachers from each other. This "inclusion track" of education is perpetuated by the existence and practices of the inclusion facilitator. Additionally, this track has led to a whole new set of labels for students with disabilities. Now called the "included" students, these learners are once again viewed as the students that don't quite

fit into "general" education. Labels such as these illustrate the assumption that in order to be "included" one must first be "excluded".

I am also concerned about the emphasis on special education in current job descriptions for inclusion specialists. It appears that inclusion specialists are being recruited from the traditional special education field and are being hired to work with the students who have always been "theirs". Under these job descriptions, students with disabilities are the responsibility of inclusion specialists and not of the classroom teachers. Additionally, general educators are not required to have an investment in or take responsibility for "included" students' learning, because, as outlined in the job descriptions, this is the responsibility of the inclusion specialists. By tying the job of the inclusion specialist to students with disabilities, we continue to stigmatize, separate and serve students based on their perceived inabilities. Students thus continue to be tied to the methods and practices of a separate "special" system of education that historically has left them excluded rather than included in their school communities. These job descriptions imply that students with disabilities are still viewed as so different from their non-disabled peers that only "special" professionals can meet their unique needs.

Another area of concern is many former special educators filling the position of inclusion facilitator find that the role is isolating and not always professionally satisfying. As Schnorr points out in her article, "Peter? He comes and goes...; First Graders' Perspectives on a Part-time Mainstream Student," students with disabilities are frequently not seen by their peers as fully participating members of their general education classrooms. Similarly, specialists are perceived to be outsiders in the schools and districts in which they work. As they come and go, in and out of various classrooms and buildings, they often miss the consistent day to day interaction with other educators that would provide them with membership and support. Because their presence is often sporadic and required only for certain situations and students, they fail to develop the sense of belonging that is important in establishing

collaborative and meaningful relationships with their co-workers. If they themselves are not included in the school community, I wonder how it is that the students tied to them can be included?

Finally, I am disturbed about some of the attitudes I encountered from inclusion specialists and general educators. A number of these professionals told me that they did not believe that inclusion was good for all students. They emphasized that some students need resource rooms and self-contained classrooms for their academic needs to be met. Additionally, general educators explained that when they became teachers, that they did not anticipate having to teach students with disabilities, nor did they want to now. I found it discouraging that comments like these came from people who claim to be in favor of inclusion and are currently working with students with disabilities.

Further Study

Student learning is fostered by a variety of "adults" in school communities. During my observations and interviews, I became aware of the impact of educational assistants on the learning of many students. Are assistants responsible for supporting students or teachers? How are they being trained to fulfill their duties? Are they responsible for implementing and designing curriculum? Who decides what assistants will do? Are they "tied" to students with disabilities? Their views and perspectives should be added to the discussion of systemic inclusion, and they need to be included in the collaborative process.

Study of the roles and responsibilities of general educators who are "doing" systemic inclusion well without the assistance of an inclusion specialist may also be useful. How do these teachers define support? What, if any, training did they receive to prepare them for working with diverse groups of students? How do they individualize curriculum and decide what to teach? By investigating the practices of these teachers, insight and information can be gained and disseminated so that other educators can benefit from their experience and possibly be encouraged by their success.

Recommendations

Teacher training programs, school administrators, school boards, and educators working in schools must find a common conceptual framework to foster systemic inclusion. This framework must be based on the premise that every student belongs in the school community and that their individual talents and skills should be strengthened and promoted by the instruction students receive. By merging special and general education at every level, from personnel to funding to instruction, all learners will have the opportunity to benefit from a broad range of experiences and teachers. By working collaboratively to develop networks of support and by diversifying curriculum and sharing their knowledge, all educators can become facilitators of inclusion.

I have realized that my own training and education has been unique. I have been encouraged by my instructors and advisors to think about every student in my classroom. Even though I will receive a degree that somewhat limits me in the scope of who I will be allowed to teach, I have been exposed to a philosophy that is consistent with systemic inclusion. I hope to receive a general education certificate along with my SHL so that I will be able to teach a broad range of learners in a variety of settings and work more effectively with other educators.

Appendix 1

Investigating Supported Education Specialists

Interview Guide #1

JOB

Tell me about your job.

- your responsibilities
- % of time on different areas
- who work with

Describe how you ended up in this job.

- previous work experience
- recruitment procedures

STUDENTS

Describe the students you work with.

- range of abilities

Tell me about the contact you have with kids.

- impact on curriculum
- IEP process
- impact on student outcomes

Tell me about some of your successes in this job.

Describe some of the obstacles you face.

- what would resolve them

PREPARATION

Tell me about how you were prepared for this position.

- teacher training

What do you think teacher training programs should teach people so that they can do this job well?

FUTURE

What do you think about the future of this role in schools?

If you could make this position ideal, what would you change, and why?

Who else should I talk to, to get more information?

Is there something I didn't ask you?

Appendix 2

Investigating the Impact of Educational Reform

on General Educators

Interview Guide #2

BACKGROUND

Educational

Teaching

CLASSROOM

Describe your classroom.

- Kids

-Class size

-Compared to other classrooms.

What has changed in your classroom within the last few years?

-Kids

-Curriculum

-Approaches to teaching

Have any of these changes excited you?

What has been difficult?

Did you anticipate this?

Think about your class. Describe three students who you find to be the most challenging, exciting, interesting, curious, or fascinating.

Thinking about the students we just talked about, are there tools, training or information that you don't have that would be helpful when working with these kids?

CURRICULUM

Tell me what you teach.

-past/currently

-modifications/adaptations

How do you plan or decide what you teach?

-grading

-input from others-who?

SUPPORTS

Tell me about the people who provide you with support?

-Job titles

-Roles and responsibilities

-What's "supportive" about what they do? Give me an example.

-Are there ever things they do, or want to do, that you don't find helpful?

Like what?

Do you have any kids on IEP's? Tell me about this process.

-Who is responsible for paperwork?

-Who gives input?

Is there anything that you wish you had known or been provided with to better prepare you for your work now?

-Training

-Education

-Support

FUTURE

If you could predict the future, what would your classroom look like in 5 years?

What will your job look like?

What will the jobs of the support people look like?

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